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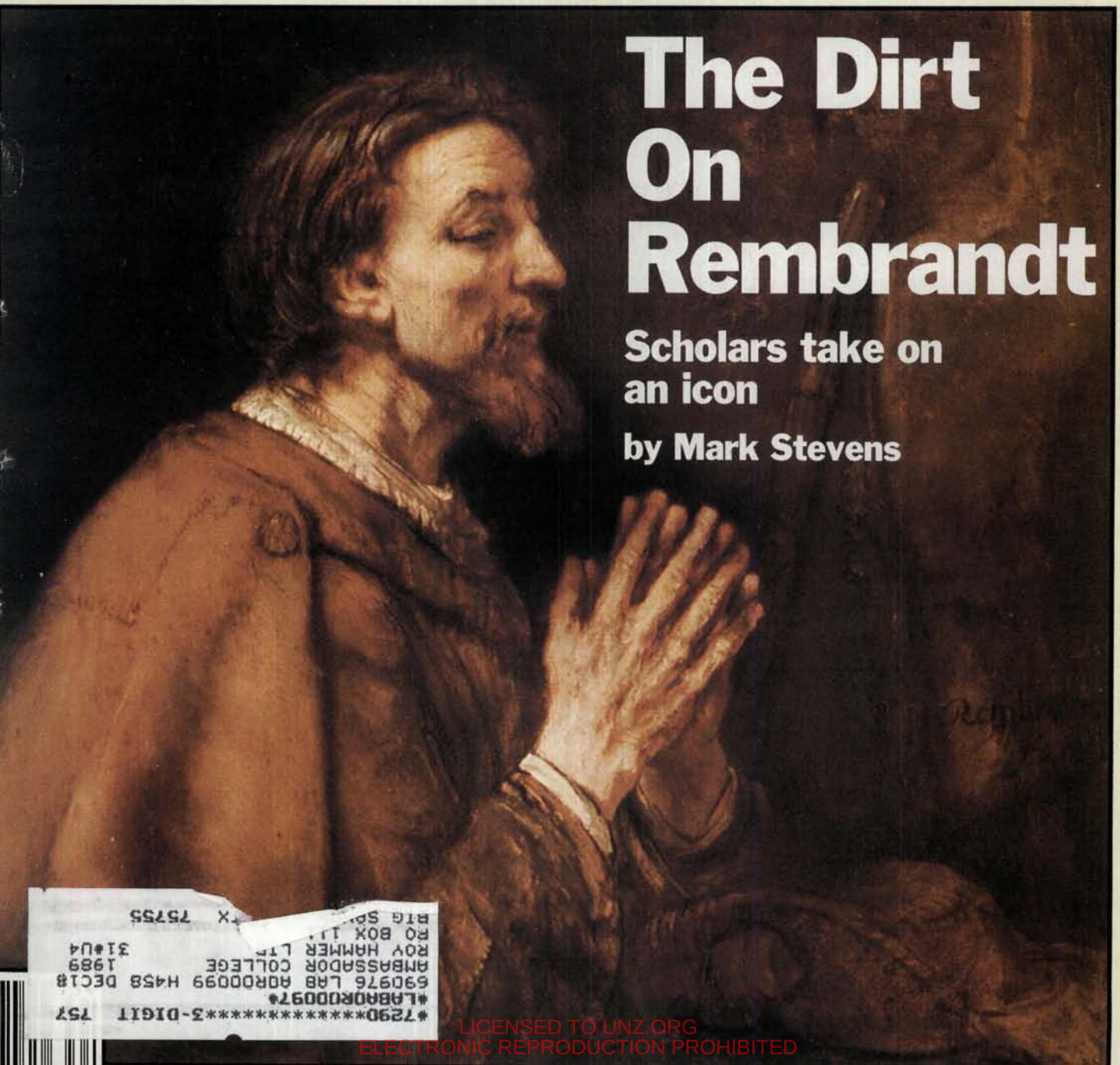
Henry Fairlie: The Washington Widow

NATHAN GLAZER ON STANFORD'S READING LIST • WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE TEAMSTERS

E EDITORS:
E DEFEAT
OF THE
OMEINIACS

THE NEW REPUBLIC



The Dirt On Rembrandt

Scholars take on an icon

by Mark Stevens

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE DINOSAUR'S DIMENSIONS

To the editors:

Daniel Yergin could have written "Taming the Dinosaur" (July 4) without visiting Mexico. He need only have compared PRI presidential candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari's promises with those of his mentor, incumbent Miguel de la Madrid, six years ago to find their source. Mexico's sad plight today tells what happened to them. On key issues, contradictions abound. Salinas told Yergin that as budget and planning minister he "contributed to the taming of the budget dinosaur," that the Mexican government has cut its expenditures. That is true only of its administrative personnel. But the federal bureaucracy as a whole has increased 34.6 percent since 1982, when de la Madrid and Salinas took office, a total of more than 500,000 persons. Today it numbers 3.29 million, while the United States, with three times Mexico's population, employs only 3.1 million persons. (Armed forces personnel are excluded in both cases.) During that period Mexico's foreign debt swelled from $85 billion to $105 billion. What "dinosaur" did Salinas tame?

Yergin tells us, "[Salinas's] plan includes further shrinking of the state sector" of the economy. Again, the facts belie the claim. Only relatively minor state-owned enterprises have been sold off; the biggest and most important remain intact. Mexico's treasury minister reveals that in the first two months of 1988 subsidies to five of them rose by 27.5 percent over the same period in 1987. In fact, all five—a supermarket conglomerate, a fertilizer complex, the federal electric commission, and the state's steel and automobile companies—registered operational losses during the first two months of this year. Had Salinas sold them off, his campaign promises would be more credible.

DANIEL JAMES
President, Mexico-United States Institute
Washington, D.C.

RATZINGER'S WORLD

To the editors:

Andrew Sullivan depicts Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger as an "otherworldy" Augustinian who is not as successful as he might be in "blending" his theology with Thomistic realism ("Cardinal Sins," July 4). The contrast between Augustinianism and Thomism is overdrawn. Cardinal Ratzinger's axiom *Deus semper maius* ("God is always greater") is not otherworldly, but rather "a part of the Platonic-Augustinian tradition that continues to have enduring value and that Thomas Aquinas also recognized as self-evident" (Ratzinger's own words from *Principles of Catholic Theology*).

According to Sullivan, Ratzinger "agrees that the Church's former teaching that sex is solely for procreation has now deepened to an understanding that it is also for personal development." The Church has never taught that sex is solely for procreation. Under the heading "deeper understanding," Ratzinger is referring to the centuries-old movement away from an Augustinian *excusatio matriomonii et copulae*, but even this movement has proceeded under the influence of Augustine's notion of *frui* or joy: the joy that is consonant with a couple's harmonizing the ends of marriage—without reductionism.

To explain all of Sullivan's imputations as misunderstandings cannot do justice to his obligatory slaps at Cardinal Ratzinger as German, as authoritarian, as "bad cop" to the pope's role as "good cop," as "altogether a more jaundiced figure" than John Paul II, and as the pope's "Dostoyevskian" inquisitor.

JOHN F. MAGUIRE
Richmond, California

BROKEN PLEDGES

To the editors:

Back in the '60s Robert Bork argued that the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment couldn't be used to strike down a $1.50 poll tax without a showing of racial discrimination. Last year his opponents turned that into the lie that he "defended poll taxes." That, and similar misrepresentations, helped defeat him. In 1977 Michael Dukakis argued that the First Amendment prohibited a state from requiring teachers to lead students in the Pledge of Allegiance, and he vetoed a bill that seemed to require it (TRB, "One Naked Individual," July 11). George Bush is trying to turn that into the lie that the governor is unpatriotic. It's a smarmy tactic but, hey, it worked once.

ROGER SWEENY
Norwood, Massachusetts

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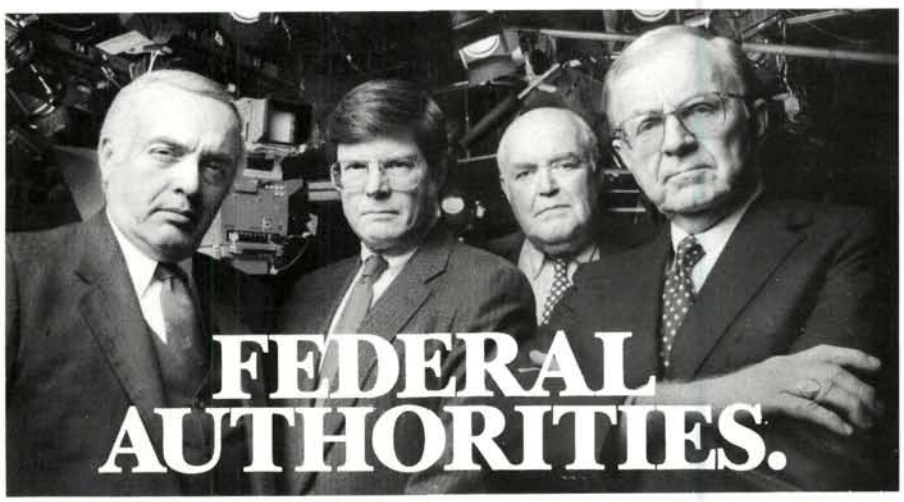

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FROM WASHINGTON

POINTY-HEADS ARE BACK

The weekend before the Moscow superpower summit in May, as the American delegation rested in Helsinki before the final assault on the Soviet heartland, White House national security adviser Colin Powell appeared on television to reassure the citizens back home that their president was prepared. Reagan had done his homework, Powell told reporters. What's more, Powell had just seen Reagan heading toward his room with a big, thick briefing book.

It was a pathetic moment. Pathetic, first of all, that the White House should feel it even necessary to insist that the leader of the free world had read his briefing books before confronting his superpower rival. What made Powell's puffery even more pathetic, though, was that surely almost no one believed him. Reagan may have toddled away with that thick briefing book, but it is almost impossible to imagine Reagan plowing through it. Who thinks he even made it through the executive summary before dozing off?

Most pathetic of all is that neither the apparent need to assert the president's mastery of the issues that would come up during the summit, nor this assertion's inherent implausibility, caused the slightest stir. We've grown used to the idea that the nation's chief executive doesn't exercise his brain very much, and—at least here in the United States—we've forgotten how astonishing this is. Imagine anyone bothering to claim publicly that Margaret Thatcher was prepared for a meeting of any sort. And imagine anyone doubting it.

But the past 12 years have seen a complete reversal in conventional notions about brains as they relate to the White House. First came Jimmy Carter to give intelligence a bad name. Then came Ronald Reagan to elevate thickheadedness into some kind of mystical power. Carter's appetite for options papers and his obsession with administrative detail (such as the infamous White House tennis court schedule) were seen as one reason for his failed presidency. Reagan's "success," meanwhile, was attributed partly to a supposed clarity of vision made possible by not trying to keep too many things in his head at once, and especially by not adding any new ingredients to the stew after about 1964. Three years ago, when Reagan's reputation was at its apogee, an active intelligence was widely considered to be not merely unnecessary to great leadership but very likely a handicap.

With the decline in Reagan's fortunes over the past couple of years, maybe this is beginning to change. One thing I find appealing about Michael Dukakis is that he's obviously very smart. Or, to avoid a tedious argument about genes, let's just say he's obviously a man of great mental energy and intellectual curiosity. George Bush doesn't radiate Reagan's sublime sense that the computers are down. But he doesn't exactly give the impression of operating with extra RAM, either.

Yes, in judging a politician, what he thinks is more important than how much he thinks. Yet oddly enough, brains still strike me as an advantage in leading the country.

But is the perception of brainpower an advantage in winning the election? You would think it would not be hard to convince the voters that intelligence is a desirable quality in the person who'll have his finger on the button, his hand on the throttle of the economy, his backside planted across the table from Gorbachev, and suchlike metaphors. But there are two potential perils.

One, of course, is the Carter analogy. Mike Dukakis, as every profile informs us, once took a book on Swedish land use planning to read on the beach. That raises the specter of a humorless bureaucrat who lacks humanity and can't see the forest for the trees. Too much "management," not enough "vision," etc. It seems to me, however, that so far the Dukakis people have done a pretty good job of turning this one around and making it into an endearing foible. Good old Duke, earnestly plugging away on Swedish land use planning while the rest of us play volleyball, and so on.

The second peril is the somewhat phony anti-elitism that seems to have gripped the strategists of both parties. Democrats are portraying George Bush as a desiccated aristocrat out of touch with the common folk; Republicans want to portray Dukakis as what used to be called a "pointy-headed liberal" from Harvard. In this atmosphere, any attempt to make a virtue of the fact that Dukakis is the more (shall we say) mentally alert of the two presidential candidates is likely to play right into the hands of the enthusiastic young demagogues who are running the Bush campaign.

No figure even remotely resembling the original pointy-headed liberal, Adlai Stevenson, could be nominated for president by either party today. Senator Paul Simon had his moment during the primaries, but that's because he managed to create a persona artfully combining the professorial demeanor of a Stevenson with a down-home, straight-talk caricature of Harry Truman. On the Republican side, meanwhile, even former football star Jack Kemp—nobody's idea of Hegel—was considered too erudite because he kept talking about the gold standard.

It was not always thus. John F. Kennedy put a great emphasis on appearing brainier than he really was. In 1960, when the Kennedy imageers wished to contrast their man's "vigor" with the lethargy of the Eisenhower years, intellect was part of the package—right in there with glamour, athleticism, and youth.

LBJ and Nixon were both traumatized by intellectual insecurities, and certainly made no issue of their intelligence, although it was formidable in both cases. In Nixon's case, his detractors probably respected his brainpower more than his admirers did; intelligence took on a negative spin with adjectives like "crafty." But as recently as 1976, when Carter defeated Gerald Ford—a man of whom it was widely joked that he couldn't walk and chew gum at the same time—mental capacity was held to be a plus, not a minus, in running for president.

Maybe Dukakis can figure out a way to make brains a political asset once more. If he's smart enough. □

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
AUGUST 22, 1988

FROM NASSER TO KHOMEINI

The Ayatollah Khomeini's sullen acquiescence to the inevitable in the Iran-Iraq war is also an admission that the Islamic revolution is finally spent. It exhausted itself on the delusionary and costly adventures of foreign domination and transforming human nature. As Fouad Ajami noted in these pages a while back (see "The Silence in Arab Culture," TNR, April 6, 1987), the failure of millenarian Shi'ism is just the latest in a series of traumatic disenchantments in the Muslim orbit in our time.

The first disappointed hope was the heady Nasserite design, born in Egypt and spread by frenzy from the Tigris to the Euphrates, of a pan-Arabism that would vanquish the Jews and eliminate the influence of the European imperial powers. This ambition was buoyed by America's betrayal of our allies at Suez in 1956, but it was destroyed in the humiliating defeat of six days in June 1967.

Then came the violent hyperbole of the Palestinians, threatening the old order of the entire Arab world with wave effects from their exemplary struggle against the Zionists (which consisted at that time mainly of killing schoolchildren). Jordan, with Israel's complicity, put paid to this grandiloquence when it threw out the PLO in "Black September" of 1970.

After the first OPEC oil gouge in 1973-74, hopes were invested in the rulers of the oil states. They, too, had fantasies of retrieved grandeur, fantasies the obsequious West indulged for a time. In the end, however, even colossal oil riches and the deference of the advanced societies could not bring modernity to the Arabs (except in weapons). If anything the wealth, during what can be seen in archaeological retrospect as the thin layer of the petro-Islamic period, clogged the creative arteries of the culture and spread a decadence and spurious modernity at odds with tradition and offensive to the genuinely pious. The up-to-date hospitals purchased in pieces in the West sometimes were never even assembled. The Arab and Muslim world's great leap forward was a bust. It brought more dislocation than progress.

In Iran, on the periphery of the Arab world, that dislocation led to the revolt of the mullahs. It was predicted that this revolt would spread since sect is more important than citizenship in that part of the world. The Shiites had justified historic grievances. They are an oppressed group throughout the Arab world—even in countries where they are the majority. But deep resentments also animated many Sunnis. All of this was lumped together as Islamic fundamentalism, austere and perfervid, demanding purity, promising purgation, posing a mortal threat to the ancien regime. Meanwhile, the traditional order was also threatened by the reappearance of the oil glut and the collapse of OPEC.

But the vast fundamentalist uprising outside Iran never materialized—except in Lebanon, where it seemed just one madness among many. In the end, the anticipated Shiite insurgency in Iraq, in the Gulf, and elsewhere was inhibited by the chaos and bloodshed its most fervent tribunes had already wrought from Qum and Tehran. And, to be sure, it was also intimidated by the sheer brutality of Sunni rule under siege in places like Iraq.

Iraq started the war with Iran in 1980, when it tried to wrestle away Iran's most valuable oil fields and a strategic waterway. Saddam Hussein thought it would be a romp. With the hostage crisis, after all, had not the Persians become outcasts? They seemed too unreliable for even the Russians to court. By contrast the apparently non-ideological but routine brutality of the governing regime in Iraq seemed familiar and reassuring. Khomeini was a prophet; Saddam Hussein was only a tyrant. Iraq became the beneficiary of a frantic arms competition between the West and the East. By last year Hussein had 5,000 to 6,000 tanks and 500 fighter aircraft.

Still, the Iranians seemed to hold their own, throwing

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ever younger sons of the poor into a battle that made Gallipoli seem like a Boy Scout exercise. Iran's poorly equipped troops even made headway on Iraqi territory, although without the help of Iraq's huge Shiite community, which was supposed to rebel in solidarity. That failure of Iraq's Shiites to rise up can be seen in hindsight as the death rattle of the fundamentalist revolution. But for the moment Hussein was desperate. Luckily for the world, Israel had taken out Iraq's nuclear capability in 1981. But Hussein did not hesitate to resort to indiscriminate bombing of cities (reciprocated) and the use of poison gas. World opinion hardly lifted an eyebrow. In the name of free passage through the oil straits that Iraq had been the first to impede, the U.S. government intervened decisively, if not exactly massively, against Iran.

The good news is that Iran has lost the war. The bad news is that Iraq has won it. Having won, however, Iraq is not so sure that it wants the war to end. The Western powers seem only slightly annoyed by Iraq's slowness actually to stop the killing. One of Iraq's preconditions, for example, is "direct talks" with a reluctant Tehran—no intermediaries. "Direct talks" are exactly what the Arab states refuse to engage in with Israel, insisting in their more accommodating moments that Israel should be content with intermediaries.

Despite all, Iraq is regarded as an American ally. For years now the message of Iraqi moderation has been trumpeted in the prestige press and in the halls of the mighty. Now that Baghdad has triumphed, its triumph can be touted as nothing less than a triumph of civilization over barbarism. It is nothing of the sort. There isn't a country in the Western orbit less attuned to the most minimal Western norms. Civil liberties, human rights, constitutionalism, scientific rationality—all wonderland stuff in Baghdad.

Iraq is now the most battle-seasoned Arab state. It has been noted correctly that Israel has a lot to fear from an Iraq flushed with victory. The praise Iraq has received from

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

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1. CARE PACKAGES

Child care. Reagan Revolution? Hahaha. The federal discovery of child care, however the parties package it, means an explosion in welfarism, and the only "debate" is over program administration. The middle class's view of the state as problem-solver strengthened from the New Deal through the Great Society; it's already back up to speed.

2. ON THE BREACH

Environment. Suddenly, everybody from *Novy Mir* to *Sports Illustrated* to Third World nation-dumps is agonizing over the environment. Though the issue in the U.S. remains tied to beach-going, it is showing every sign of surviving the summer. The environment has long been awaiting a focusing statement or spokesperson, and it is going to get both.

3. WHERE IS GEORGE?

The race. The hot handle on the campaign has become "optimism," or more properly, reassurance. Voter decisions aren't based on current conditions, but on angst; winning candidates are reassuring candidates. Thus, today's economy does Bush no good with nervous voters. GOP spots are pushing Carteresque angst, but more interesting is their failure even to mention Bush.

4. GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK

King Hussein. Who knows what Hussein is up to? This is the Middle East. What's most interesting about the story is all the explanations of Jordan's intricate involvement on the West Bank these past two decades: salaries, development programs, parliamentary representation. Not much of this had been part of the Israeli occupation story all these years.

5. HARMONIC CONVERGENCE

U.N. So now everybody loves the U.N., do they? What a phony story. The U.N. is OK this week because a number of countries find it a convenient place to turn to for their own purposes. But being an institution of resort is very far from being a shaping institution, a distinction that seems lost among the hosannas of the moment.

6. THE RAZA'S EDGE

Bilingualism. The place of Spanish in U.S. culture is about to undergo a serious test. Having demonstrated both commercial and political significance, Spanish is being further legitimized as a U.S. language by Dukakis's pointed use of it. Problem is, many Anglos are less than impressed by political polyglotism; they like English.

7. NO BLADE OF GRASS

Greenhouse. A flip through the shortwave bands these days is like finding yourself in one of those end-of-the-world paperbacks of the 1950s. The entire Northern Hemisphere is talking about its abysmal weather. The British rain is too much even for Londoners, and it's searingly hot *in Siberia.* Will reality make '50s SF—and '70s ecofiction—seem prophetic or naive?

8. HANDS IN HIS LAPIN

Playboy. Everybody's knocking the declining Hugh Hefner, but they're missing half the story. Sure, the women's movement raised yuppie consciousness. But Hef was undone from the bottom too. *Penthouse* and *Hustler* made Hef's "sophisticated" wrappings beside the point. What's replaced his wine, jazz, and sports car snobbism in the culture? Lowbrow brand-namism.

9. LACE TO THE SWIFT

Summer Olympics. Give the Joyners and Kersees credit: they're all over the press, and they haven't even won any medals. Running in lace, nail polish, and jewelry, long hair flying, Flo Joyner has already become a sex star, despite a sport as neuterizing as track. Just one gold and she'll do what few black athletes have accomplished: she'll cross over to do mainstream ads, at the least.

10. FILM FESTIVAL OF NICEA

The Last Temptation of Christ. Why is Scorsese's adaptation of Kazanzakis's religious novel raising a bigger ruckus than more "blasphemous" films by Godard or Pasolini? Probably because it bounces off a rumor, making fundamentalist rounds for years, of a hardcore Jesus porno movie. Also, it's in English. If only these protesters had seen *La Ricotta* or *Teorema.*

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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Western governments and elites will only encourage it to look for new opportunities to confirm its prestige. Marching toward Jerusalem is always a promising path to leadership among the Arabs, and the current vacuum of Arab leadership makes it especially enticing.

In the past the Iraqis have felt themselves usurped as the leaders of pan-Arabism: first by Egypt, then by Syria. Their current triumph throws another wild card into the Arab-Israeli peace process. The insubstantiality of Jordan as a nation is a standing invitation to Iraq. Is it too big a stretch to imagine Iraq on the river Jordan, making common cause with the PLO? This is a danger not only to Israel, but also to Syria. The governments of Iraq and Syria share intellectual and political origins but also a fierce enmity. And there are other Arab nations that now have to fear the country whose war against Iran they funded: the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, the ruler of the emirates. These Arabs know the habitual thuggery of Iraqi regimes, and their pleasure at Baghdad's victory is considerably more muted than Washington's and London's. Last month Saddam Hussein had to flatter them; henceforth they will have to flatter him.

It is possible, though, that Iraq's recent flirtation with moderation—a flirtation born of desperation—may persuade it to take a different tack with the Israelis. Iraq has just experienced the concrete benefits of American patronage. There are now men in power in Baghdad—the present foreign minister, the former ambassador to Washington—arguing that Iraq can consolidate this patronage by opting out of the struggle for Palestine. Such an abdication would not be done with a grand rhetorical flourish. The anti-Zionist rhetoric might actually intensify, but the reality would abandon the Palestinians to pursue their goals, as the king of Jordan once coldly put it, "with the means they see fit." Such an Iraqi disengagement would constitute a sea change in Arab politics, especially given Jordan's recent moves to leave the PLO to its own modest devices. For Iraq to abandon the Palestinians would be good for Israel. What it augurs for Iraq's Arab neighbors (or for Iran) is unclear.

With the end of the war, an academic racket will come to an end. There will be no more half-learned treatises on the threat of the Muslim fundamentalists. But the Shiite grievance, tainted by its ties with Khomeiniism and pushed out of consciousness by Arabs and Westerners alike, will continue to fester. The triumph of the official Sunni ruling classes, which have dominated the fertile crescent since the Ottomans, will smother that grievance for a while. We may console ourselves that order has been restored. Yet it will only be for the time being. Still, isn't it better, the diplomatists will ask, that the upper hand be someone's with whom one can do business? But Iraq is poised to try to be the next great liberating Arab illumination in the sorry procession starting with Nasser's Egypt. If that's how it decides to move, there will be much suffering and much bloodshed. And then the only result of which we may be confident is that we will be looking down the barrel of another traumatic disenchantment.

NOTEBOOK

□ THANKS, ALAN:

Greenspan Sees Stable Rates

—*New York Times*, July 14

Greenspan Signals Higher Interest Rates

—*Wall Street Journal*, same day

Greenspan Warns of Inflation

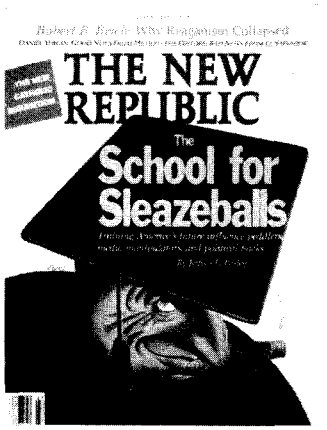
—*Washington Post*, same day

Greenspan expects growth, low inflation

—*Baltimore Sun*, same day

□ ANTI-SEMITISM I: In the very week that Jesse Jackson grandiloquently announced his intention to negotiate the release of American hostages in Lebanon, he declined to intervene where his influence might have done some real good. That's in Jackson's hometown of Chicago, where the stench of black anti-Semitism has grown especially intense. (See "Political Perversity in Chicago" by Jonathan Brent, TNR, August 8 & 15.) Social surveys indicate that black anti-Semitism rises with education. This is exactly the reverse of how bigotry works among other ethnic and racial groups. There, certainly, was an opportunity for Jackson to try to clear some "common ground." He brushed off the whole Chicago controversy with a shrug, and said it was time to "move on." We understand his discomfort. But "move on" to what? To something presidential, of course. Like relations with Iran. And just how exactly was Jackson planning to establish contact with the Iranians? Through the good offices of Arab ambassadors, Jackson responded. This is like trying to reach President Botha through President Mugabe.

□ ANTI-SEMITISM II: Several readers have written in about our July 4 cover ("The School for Sleazeballs") complaining—to our astonishment—that it is anti-Semitic. Some of the complainers were not even associated with the institution that was the subject of the article. One reader wrote that he is "not ordinarily sensitive" to this sort of thing. Well, as regular readers are aware, we *are* ordinarily sensitive to this sort of thing. But in this case, we think the complaint is absurd. Here's that cover again, so you can decide for yourself.



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☐ FAULTY RADAR, DAY ONE:

MOSCOW PROPOSES TO REMOVE RADAR

—*New York Times*, July 20

Soviets stand firm on keeping radar

—*Washington Times*, same day

☐ FAULTY RADAR, DAY TWO:

U.S. Welcomes Soviet Radar Proposal

—*New York Times*, July 21

U.S. Rejects Soviet Bid to Link Radar, ABM Pact

—*Washington Post*, same day

(thanks to several readers)

☐ THE VIEW FROM ABROAD:

U.S. Welcomes Radar Plan

—*International Herald Tribune*, July 22

Les Etats-Unis rejettent la proposition soviétique sur le démantèlement du radar de Krasnoïarsk

—*Le Monde*, same day

☐ THE PERILS OF WRITING TOO LONG: "WASHINGTON—In a corner of history far from the Pentagon fraud scandal that is now consuming his life, Melvyn R. Paisley was a hero. . . . Yet the Paisleys were not ostentatious. He didn't drive fancy cars. . . . Paisley is still surrounded by symbols of the success he fashioned in business and government—a big house in exclusive McLean, Va.; matching Jaguar luxury cars in the garage. . . ."—from the beginning, middle, and end of a characteristically lengthy article in the *Los Angeles Times*, June 27

☐ GOOD TIMES, BAD TIMES:

Advantages Of Job Hunt In Summer

—*New York Times*, July 12

Dog days of summer aren't best for job-hunting

—*Washington Times*, same day

(thanks to Rikki Baum, Washington, D.C.; Charles C. Yoder, Arlington, VA)

☐ OH, THAT EXPLAINS IT:

Stock Prices Rise 22.41 to 2130.87
On the Heels of Resurgent Dollar

—*Wall Street Journal*, June 29

Stocks Fall 8.89 as Surging Dollar
Raises Fears That Rates Will Rise

—same paper, next day

(thanks to David L. Gardin, Santa Clara, California)

Human rights or politics?

BROKEN WATCH

IN MAY 1986, when the Reagan administration was claiming that Nicaragua held between 7,500 and 10,000 political prisoners, the human rights group Americas Watch issued a report asserting that "as of this writing, Americas Watch knows of two cases of political prisoners in the sense in which that term is used in the United States." Even now, after the latest political crackdown in Nicaragua, Americas Watch counts the number of "prisoners of conscience" at "a handful," whereas the State Department says that the Sandinistas are still holding 7,000 to 8,000 people for political reasons. Is the discrepancy a matter of definition, or of distortion and bias?

Similarly, Americas Watch reported in March 1986 that "as best we can determine, torture—as the term is generally understood—is not practiced in Nicaragua as a means of eliciting information or confessions, nor as a form of punishment." The same report declared that "harsh interrogation techniques are practiced, apparently as a matter of policy," including putting prisoners in cells the size of telephone booths, depriving them of light, water, sleep, or food for days, and occasionally threatening them with death. Americas Watch claims that it is being meticulous in its definition of torture. Rival human rights groups accuse it of letting the Sandinistas off easy.

In El Salvador, meanwhile, the administration emphasizes improvements in human rights conditions under the U.S.-backed government of José Napoleón Duarte—including the reduction in death squad killings from 400 a month in 1981 to 24 in all of 1987. Americas Watch asserted this March that "improvement in human rights is not measured by lower death squad body counts alone, especially when the pool of potential victims has been dramatically reduced by killings and persistent fear." It declared that "the human rights situation remains as bleak as ever."

Americas Watch is also accusing the Salvadoran government of systematic deprivation of labor rights and is seeking to have the U.S. special trade representative lift some of its duty-free privileges. The U.S. ambassador in El Salvador, the American Institute for Free Labor Development, and its parent, the AFL-CIO, accuse AW of getting most of its evidence from a labor organization allied with Salvador's Communist guerrilla force, the FMLN, and of all but ignoring the major labor federation, which opposes withdrawal of trade preferences. AW says it's the dissidents who need protection the most.

These differences—and hundreds of others—have led to vituperative exchanges between administration officials and Americas Watch. As AW was about to publish its latest report on Nicaragua, timed for the first anniversary of the signing of the Arias peace plan on August 4, and as Congress was once again considering aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*, the administration's top Latin America policy-

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maker, Elliott Abrams, charged in an interview that AW "is not a human rights group, but a left-wing political group masquerading as a human rights group." Of Aryeh Neier, AW's leading spokesman and executive director of Human Rights Watch, the umbrella group of which AW is a part, Abrams said, "He is a strange bird politically. I don't doubt that he's anti-communist. The only thing I can figure is that he is a violent partisan who hates Ronald Reagan intently and is determined to have no enemies to his left."

For its part, AW said of the administration in its February 1987 report on Nicaragua: "By supporting an insurgency that engages in a deliberate pattern of violating fundamental standards of laws of war; by providing that insurgency with training, equipment, direction, and public relations advocacy; by invoking human rights arguments to justify its pursuit of other interests and distorting the reality of human rights violations committed by the Nicaraguan government; and by engaging in slanderous attacks on those who oppose those policies within the United States, the Reagan administration has not only contributed to poisoning the debate in this country, but has also rendered a major disservice to the cause of human rights in Nicaragua and elsewhere." Of Abrams, a high-ranking official of Human Rights Watch (not Neier) said, "Frankly, he's so extreme in his reporting that he's disqualified himself in the things he's done, the name-calling. . . . I don't think he should be there."

SO WHO'S RIGHT? Well, let's say the two sides deserve each other. The administration, as AW charges, probably has exaggerated the crimes of the Sandinistas and certainly has underplayed—almost to the point of total denial—the human rights violations of the *contras*. It also has overstated the human rights progress in El Salvador. AW therefore serves the useful function of adjusting the record and putting pressure on the administration. As combatants go, you could not ask for a better match—in terms of intelligence, self-assurance, activism, sometimes savage partisanship, and argumentative skill—than Abrams and Neier. But you should not expect to get the whole truth from either side, and that's a sad comment about either a human rights group or a government.

It's especially sad in view of the reputation for accuracy and fairness developed over the past decade by Helsinki Watch, the founding group that now forms one part of Human Rights Watch. Started by Robert Bernstein, board chairman of Random House, Helsinki Watch has concentrated on advancing human rights in the East bloc and Turkey. Besides it and Americas Watch, founded in 1981, the Watch groups include Asia Watch, which is also developing a reputation for evenhandedness (even within the administration) with reports on Tibet, Taiwan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Korea, and Vietnam, and three organizations now in formation: Africa Watch, Middle East Watch, and Prison Watch, which will monitor conditions here and abroad.

Bernstein and others give Neier principal credit for the growth and activism of the watch committees. Next year their combined budget will be $3 million, ten times the 1981 budget and double the 1987 budget. That's still considerably smaller than Amnesty USA, the American arm of Amnesty International, with a budget of $16.5 million, but the Watches probably are the fastest growing human rights group in America, and their range is wider than that of Amnesty, which concentrates on prisoners rights. The major funding sources are the Ford Foundation, which gave Helsinki Watch its first $500,000 in 1978, and the MacArthur Foundation, plus the Revson Foundation, the J. M. Kaplan Foundation, and financier George Soros.

All the Watch committees are prodigiously productive. With a professional staff of just six people—two in New York, three in Washington, and one in Central America—Americas Watch produced 14 major reports in 1987, plus dozens of interim documents, submissions to government bodies, op-ed pieces, and magazine articles.

Neier rises at 5 a.m. each day to do his writing. His pieces can be biting, and his style is to be relentless. In 1986, when the International League for Human Rights published a report on abuses in Nicaragua, Neier unleashed a 42-page attack claiming that the league report was "fundamentally wrong in conception, wrong on the law, and, in many places, wrong on the facts," and also, by failing to cover *contra* abuses, was serving as "a propaganda tool" for the administration. Neier often questions the motives and independence of those who disagree with him, responds to every perceived slight, and pounces on every vulnerability. In this, he resembles no one so much as Elliott Abrams.

Neier denies that he or Americas Watch are leftist. In college (Cornell '58), he says, "I regarded myself as an anti-communist, but of the liberal left, very much a Norman Thomas person." He says that Thomas is the only person whose photo hangs in his house, though his identification with Thomas now is with his civil libertarianism, not his socialism. "I do not have a strong political identification now," he told me. "In the last quarter of a century, I've thought of myself as preoccupied with civil liberties. He had a stormy career as executive director of the ACLU, defending Vietnam War draft evaders and Nazi marchers in Skokie, Illinois, but resisting moves to get the ACLU into partisan politics. He quit the editorial board of the *Nation* over a "repulsive piece," charging that jailed Soviet dissident Anatoly Sharansky was a CIA agent.

Though he denies that Americas Watch is "political," Neier acknowledges that it was founded in reaction to the arrival of the Reagan administration. "Those of us who created Helsinki Watch," he said, felt that it "threatened to undercut Helsinki Watch because it politicized the issue of human rights in the Soviet Union." When Jeane Kirkpatrick suggested treating friendly authoritarian regimes more charitably than hostile totalitarian ones, "We felt that the only way we could be credible in dealing with human rights in the Soviet Union, and not subject to the charge of waging a cold war attack, was if we were even handed and were concerned with human rights abuses in friendly authoritarian countries."

As it's turned out, he said, the administration is not

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nearly as bad on human rights as Neier expected. "It's moved to a tremendous degree. At the outset, it would have been inconceivable that it would be essentially in all-out opposition to the Pinochet regime. I'd say it's through constant prodding, constant debate, and constant challenge that the Reagan administration decided to make the human rights issue its own."

Actually, some officials in the administration—even Abrams—think Americas Watch does good work in such places as Peru, Chile, and Colombia. The rub is in Central America, where, one top human rights official said, "there is a significant bias and a good amount of intellectual dishonesty. The bias clearly is in favor of the totalitarian left, in terms of minimizing the human rights abuses of the Nicaraguan government and the FMLN and of greatly exaggerating the abuses of the elected government of El Salvador and the *contras*."

This is exactly the charge, in reverse, leveled by Neier against the administration. To determine conclusively which side is right, one would have to run down and check hundreds of alleged cases of human rights abuse in Central America, and that's impossible. But there are indications that, either out of political conviction or in reaction to the excesses of the administration, Americas Watch has gone out of its way to defend the Sandinistas and explain away their abuses, to underplay the progress made by Duarte in El Salvador, and to ignore the consequences of a Communist triumph in both countries.

In attacking the findings of the International League for Human Rights, for example, Neier declared (legitimately) that all of those who were in jail in Nicaragua for opposing the Sandinistas could not be considered "human rights defenders." He said they included former Somoza-era National Guardsmen, *contra* combatants, *contra* collaborators, draft resisters, Sandinista soldiers, and people imprisoned for peaceful expression. Sometimes citing U.S. law, he proceeded to defend the Sandinistas' right to jail all but those in the last category. Neier has used the same distinction in declaring the number of "political prisoners" to be minuscule. Yet other AW reports detail the arbitrary nature of Sandinista justice, making it clear that someone accused of collaborating with the *contras* is almost certain to be jailed, whether guilty or not. Neier agrees such people are badly treated, but insists they are not "political prisoners."

Some AW reports have tended to rationalize restrictions on the Catholic Church and the press, saying they have failed to criticize the *contras* or have sided with enemy (American) policy during wartime. AW distinguishes between "psychological torture"—which can include physical abuse such as being kept in a tiny, stifling box—and "physical torture," such as electric shocks, though other groups say either practice violates international law.

AW's most vivid descriptions are of *contra* atrocities—especially of indiscriminate attacks on civilian agricultural cooperatives and of after-combat killing of Sandinista militiamen—but administration officials say AW downplays the extent to which Sandinista policy is to relocate peasants forcibly and push them into militarized cooperatives. Of course, there is no excuse for the *contras* to butcher innocent civilians, and AW's signal contribution is to expose the *contra* disregard for the lives of people they are ostensibly trying to liberate. On the other hand, AW does not explain why peasants in some areas decide to support the *contras*.

As for El Salvador, AW reports occasionally defend the government's right to combat the FMLN insurgency, but in nowhere near the solicitous terms used for the Sandinistas. In challenging El Salvador's trade preferences, AW lumps together all "organized workers" to indict government abuses, even though violence has been directed mostly at adherents of UNTS, the union used by the Communists (captured FMLN documents indicate) as an urban guerrilla force.

Neier acknowledged in an interview that AW is tougher on the Salvadoran government than on the Sandinistas. "If the Sandinistas had murdered tens of thousands of people, we'd have criticized them as we do the government of El Salvador," he said. "We agree that it's a terrible thing to close a newspaper, but that does not invite the same language as the murder of tens of thousands of people." That's a good argument, but when the murder rate falls from an average of 5,000 a year down to 24, one would expect the government to receive at least as much praise as Neier accorded Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega this May, when he wrote to him to say: "We applaud lifting of the state of emergency and reinstatement of all constitutional rights." In El Salvador Duarte had lifted the state of emergency long before Ortega got around to it. Neier says he stopped writing letters to Duarte because he never got replies. AW officials say there has been praise for Duarte's allowing refugees and dissident politicians to return home.

Neier's letter to Ortega also declared that "Nicaragua currently has the freest printed press in Central America"—even though the press can be closed down at a moment's notice, which in fact subsequently happened. Neier congratulated Ortega on abolishing the Anti-Somocista Tribunals—but AW now has been forced to acknowledge that police courts are meting out the same arbitrary justice to political dissidents as before.

NOT CONTENT merely to report on human rights abuses, AW has taken a militant policy stand against U.S. funding of the *contras*, declaring them last November to be "an outlaw force operating beyond the pale of civilized conduct" and condemning the administration for "acting as the systematic apologist for their abuses." In El Salvador AW criticizes the FMLN for summary executions, assassinations, and use of land mines, but employs nothing like the language it uses on the *contras*.

Nor does it criticize Nicaragua for giving political support to the FMLN, or the Soviet Union, Cuba, and the rest of the East bloc for giving aid and training to Nicaraguan security police. Neier admits this is a failing—but says AW would have to be evenhanded if it corrected it, by criticizing Taiwan and Israel for their support of brutal security forces in Guatemala. That's fair. If the facts support the case, let's do it.

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The big problem is that Americas Watch now is getting what it has always wanted in Nicaragua. The *contras* have been defunded, are leaving Nicaragua, and are not likely to get new military aid. But even though a democratic peace process supposedly is under way, Nicaragua is cracking down on its opposition. Police tear gassed and beat up opposition demonstrators at Nandaime on July 10, jailed 40 of them, and charged six top opposition leaders with offenses that may lead to long sentences. When *La Prensa* and Radio Católica reported on the incident, they were closed down.

In its newest report on Nicaragua, AW suddenly has discovered that what it previously reported as "sporadic" Sandinista abuses against peasants sympathetic to the *contras*—kidnappings and murders—may actually "reflect a pattern," as the administration and other human rights groups long have asserted.

All this suggests that, when *contra* military pressure is turned off, the true nature of the Sandinista regime will emerge: that of a Leninist regime where dissent is not tolerated. This, Neier says, is not Americas Watch's concern. "Judging the nature of the regime—that is not our issue," he said. "Our responsibility is to protect human rights whichever regime is in power . . . to embarrass the regime, to cost it international support and secure amelioration." But that's a cop-out. By lobbying so effectively against the *contras* in Congress and with the public, Americas Watch has helped the Sandinistas stay in power. What the Sandinistas do next—to their own people and to their neighbors—is partly Americas Watch's responsibility.

MORTON M. KONDRACKE

POSTCARD CZECHOSLOVAKIA

PRAGUE SUMMER

TWENTY YEARS after the Soviet invasion, Czechoslovakia continues to be a place where some of the most talented, energetic citizens occupy jobs as latrine cleaners because they are not allowed to work in their professions. The regime remains stagnant and regressive, despite the replacement of Gustav Husak by Milos Jakes as Party leader last December. But the nation is no longer suffused with the hopelessness and desperation of Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. It has entered a post-trauma, post-Kundera era. During the past few years another culture, another political spirit, has emerged, fueled by a broadening movement of activists pushing for fundamental change.

I measure the distance Czechoslovakia has traveled against my memory of Prague's Wenceslaus Square (in reality a broad boulevard flanked by sidewalks) on a cold day in February 1969. One month before, a 21-year-old philosophy student named Jan Palach had set himself alight there to protest the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia since August 21, 1968. All hope seemed to have vanished. As a student visiting Prague for the first time, I could find no hint of the passion that had inspired Palach's suicide—only the sullen, drawn faces of people who seemed intent on avoiding eye contact as they scurried home to their private worlds. But even then I encountered a small hint of defiance. A middle-aged man quickly confirmed his impression that I was a foreigner, and delivered a curt message: "Don't think that we all accept this."

Time has proven him right, despite his country's long, dark journey since the Kremlin decided that tanks were the proper response to the Prague Spring. Two months after the invasion Louis Aragon warned that the destruction of this short-lived experiment in reform communism and cultural renaissance could lead to "the Biafra of the spirit." In 1979 Kundera, by then in exile, bemoaned "the massacre of the Czech culture." That was accurate as far as officially sanctioned culture was concerned. "Normalization," that favorite euphemism of terrified despots, did enforce a deadening conformity in public life and, at first, private resignation. But today there is an almost palpable, if still labored, reawakening of the citizenry.

This is something that is hard to understand for those trapped in the memories of 1968, whichever side they were on. When Alexander Dubček visited Prague this past January, he cautioned people who came up to him on the street that they might be putting themselves in danger. They brushed aside his warnings. What he didn't realize was that the regime that punished him in 1968 for trying to democratize government and decentralize the economy (he was demoted from first secretary of the Communist Party to a forestry worker) no longer inspires the fear it once did.

Czechoslovakia began stirring in the late 1970s, when a small group of intellectuals organized Charter 77, a human rights movement that then spawned a "parallel culture"—samizdat publications, private seminars, concerts, and religious gatherings. Initially the activists felt isolated and vulnerable. They served long prison terms, and many ordinary citizens and foreign visitors shunned them. But they remained convinced they could have an impact simply by telling the truth about their country. "When free speech is suppressed, speech paradoxically has a special weight and power," explained the playwright Vaclav Havel, whose plays are staged only abroad and who has served his share of prison time.

Such views no longer sound purely theoretical. Havel must escape his Prague apartment when he wants to get any writing done, because he and other Charter activists find themselves playing host to a constant stream of visitors: local sympathizers, Western officials and journalists, and itinerant activists from other Soviet bloc countries. Charter has maintained close links to Poland's Solidarity, holding a joint meeting on the border last summer, and has developed contacts with Hungarian, East German, and even Soviet human rights groups. All this, along with an intense if often skeptical fascination with developments inside the Soviet Union, has

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stripped away the activists' sense of isolation.

The parallel culture exists on a smaller scale than in Poland, but one can easily find Czechs who study at home everything from ancient Greek and Hebrew to the Bible and astrology. The samizdat press focuses on human rights abuses, the disastrous state of the environment, and religious affairs. Five hundred thousand Catholics recently signed a petition demanding religious freedoms and an end to the government's suffocating control of Church appointments. The government has since accepted the appointment of three new bishops, but ten of Czechoslovakia's 13 dioceses still lack full bishops.

Activists are exploiting new technologies to challenge the government's monopoly on information. The spread of VCRs has already produced a flourishing black market in uncensored movies from abroad, including politically charged offerings like Andrzej Wajda's Solidarity-era films from Poland. When Karel Srp finished serving a 16-month sentence earlier this year for his leadership of the Jazz Section, a popular music club and publishing operation, he was astounded to be immediately interviewed for the first independent video journal.

Beyond the activists' own efforts, several factors have contributed to the livelier atmosphere. Gorbachev's reformist rhetoric makes it awkward for the government, which is acutely sensitive to the charge that it is out of step with the times, to suppress dissent consistently. To be sure, it still frequently resorts to heavy-handed tactics. In June police broke up a Charter-sponsored East-West peace seminar, detaining several Czech participants and expelling 34 foreigners. And in April, 35-year-old Pavel Wonka died in prison from a "lung embolism," a reminder that dissidents can still pay the ultimate price for their convictions. But the government doesn't relish casting itself as more draconian than the Kremlin, and it has lately avoided imposing long-term prison sentences.

The regime bought political peace in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion by promoting consumer spending and skimping on investment. As a result the country's once-formidable industrial base is becoming obsolete, unable to compete in Western markets. Czechoslovakia's share of trade with socialist countries rose from 65 percent in 1980 to 79.1 percent last year. Though many Czechs continue to take some comfort from the fact that they live relatively well by Soviet bloc standards, they realize that life is not getting any better—and they are increasingly prone to making unflattering comparisons with what they know about life in the West. It's hard for the regime to command full obedience amid economic stagnation.

Jakes has belatedly adopted the rhetoric of *perestroika*, but even government economists concede that so far there have been no real reforms of the rigidly centralized economy. And few Czechs believe that a government that has suppressed all reform for the past 20 years can institute meaningful changes now. In any event, the activists' goals go beyond *perestroika*; they are demanding no less than true political pluralism, implicitly rejecting the 1968 notion that communism can have a human face. "If you accept the leading role of the Party, there is no democracy," says Vaclav Maly, a former priest who was defrocked by the government in 1979 because of his dissident activities and whose most recent job was cleaning latrines in the Prague subway. Organizers of a new "Democratic Initiative" have openly called for a return to the democratic principles espoused by Tomas Masaryk, the country's first president.

Activists believe that Gorbachev's initiatives offer them new opportunities, but their long-term goals differ from his. The Soviet leader wants reforms to save the Soviet, and the entire bloc's, system; the activists believe that ultimately such reforms, if successful, will lead to the system's dissolution. They don't expect that to happen overnight, especially given the continued demoralization and passivity of many of their countrymen. And they know that they can succeed only if the pressure for change gathers momentum throughout the Soviet empire. But they feel that at last the constellation of internal and external forces is slowly aligning in their favor.

ANDREW NAGORSKI

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An election issue we don't need.

KIDS 'Я' U.S.

IT'S OFFICIAL: a consensus on the need to do something about the day-care problem has congealed. Not only has George Bush proposed a $2.2 billion "Children's Tax Credit" for poor families; *Ronald Reagan* has seconded the motion. Granted, little of the money would actually go toward child care. When you give $1,000 per preschool child, with no strings attached, to a family making $11,000, the chances of it ending up in a day-care savings account are slim. And, granted, the whole thing is an election-year face-lift for Bush. Still, the voices of modern conservatism are now on record as saying that the government should fund a new, expensive program aimed, at least nominally, at child care.

Bush thus joins Michael Dukakis, who has endorsed (more or less) the Act for Better Child Care Services (ABC), a $2.5 billion Democratic bill that would subsidize day care for lower- and middle-income families. And he joins just about everyone in Congress, which now houses more than 100 child-care bills from all across the spectrum.

The trouble with the new day-care consensus is its shallowness. Few of the politicians suddenly losing sleep over the fate of America's toddlers have asked themselves whether those toddlers are any of their business. Why, if at all, should the government subsidize day care? Confusion over this question is deeply embedded in the existing

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child-care tax credit, which reimburses parents at all income levels for a fraction of their costs. It is also reflected in most child-care proposals now on the menu. ABC is a good example. Its supporters, by overstating the government's legitimate role in day care, would shortchange the families who need help the most.

PROPONENTS of subsidized day care typically justify government involvement by noting that, as women enter the work force, more parents are complaining about the shortage of affordable care. That's true. But people complain about the shortage of affordable alligator-skin shoes, too. The day-care lobby may be larger than the alligator-skin shoe lobby, but the size of a special-interest group bears no necessary correlation to the merit of its claim on the government purse.

Of course, there's a second difference between day care and alligator-skin shoes: day care makes the economy more productive, by freeing women to enter the work force. Shouldn't the government encourage people to do things that make society as a whole better off? No, not unless people will otherwise fail to do them. In the case of day care, the gain in societal efficiency is fully felt in the pocketbooks of the workers, and therefore is realized through the rational pursuit of self-interest. That gain is easy to quantify: the salary of the wage-earner who would otherwise stay home with the kids, minus day-care costs. Now that the idea of working mothers is socially acceptable, this incentive should be enough to send women into the work force without government help. And it appears to be doing exactly that. Over the past ten years, the percentage of children under six with working mothers has grown from 38 to 53.

Naturally, some parents will resist the temptation of a second salary. They'll decide that, given the viruses their kid will encounter at a day-care center, given the warmth and personal attention he or she will miss, the monetary gain won't justify the doctor's bills and the toll on emotional or intellectual development. And who knows? Maybe they're right—in which case day care *isn't*, in the long run, the optimally utilitarian route for society to take. Right or wrong, parents are in a better position to make this call than anyone else, and the government has no business blurring their vision.

Day-care advocates say the situation is more complicated than this. They talk of building a day-care "infrastructure"—as if a network of day-care centers, like a municipal subway, were so vast and complex that only a government could create it coherently. But day-care centers are more like dry cleaners; they spring up where demand justifies them. Parents may complain about driving miles to drop their kids off, and there's no doubt that it takes time, especially in a young industry, for supply to catch up with demand. Still, the number of licensed day-care centers has more than doubled since 1976, and the number of home-based day-care providers has grown by more than half. If ten years from now some parents are still complaining that they can't afford the day care they want, maybe that will be the market's way of saying they shouldn't both be working—that, given the level of child care they demand, the size of the second income, the low demand for day care in their neighborhood, etc., etc., societal efficiency will best be served if one of them just stays home.

Notwithstanding the Econ-101 argument against day-care subsidies, there is a case for some government intervention—or, rather, for much intervention in some sectors. Precisely because day care doesn't need a push from the government, it is well on its way to becoming part of the average childhood experience. Whether this is a bad thing is moot, because it's coming of its own accord. What is *definitely* a bad thing is when gaping inequality enters the system. In upper-income families, which can afford BMW-caliber day-care centers or in-home care, toddlers get good preschool education, with their intellectual, emotional, and nutritional development attended to. But for lower-income families, day care can be no more than institutionalized, and sometimes negligent, baby-sitting. Preventing this pattern from taking root would be important in any era. Now, when the stagnation of the lowest economic classes threatens to turn the American Dream from a half-truth into a sham, preventing it is urgent. That's the reason—the *only* reason—government should subsidize day care.

I'm not saying that lower-income children are at any more of a developmental disadvantage in day care than they were back when they were reared at home. This may be the case, and if so, my argument is that much stronger. But my point is simply that the coming of day care makes it suddenly practical for the government to step in and neutralize some of the disadvantages that undeniably afflict lower-income children. This sort of support has other virtues: for a poor single mother, it can mean the difference between welfare and economic self-sufficiency. As the government gets more and more serious about workfare, its involvement in day care for poor families will be unavoidable.

THE FIRST STEP toward a sensible day-care policy is to rip out the child-care tax credit for middle- and upper-income families. Douglas Besharov of the American Enterprise Institute has estimated that confining the credit to families with incomes under $25,000 (not a lot, when you're raising kids) would save well over $2 billion in 1989—enough, roughly, to fund the Bush plan, ABC, or a preferable alternative.

Which will it be? Not the Bush plan. It's laudable, the idea of an income supplement for poor working parents. In effect, it's a way to expand the earned income tax credit, which reasonable people have been proposing for some time. (And it's curiously reminiscent of George McGovern's 1972 "$1,000 for everybody" plan, which forever stigmatized him as a dangerous radical.) If we can afford an expanded tax credit, we should have one. But we should debate the proposal in honest terms, and not pretend it will appreciably raise the quality of child care.

ABC has flaws too, but at least it's a child-care bill. Via the states, it would give money either to working parents in the form of child-care vouchers or directly to day-care

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centers on their behalf. For the poorest parents, it would pay virtually all of the $3,000 or so that decent day care costs. Unfortunately, it would go way beyond them: it would reach families making up to the median income in each state. The problem with this isn't so much that $33,000 a year—the nationwide median—is a long way from poor. After all, people making that much would get reimbursed for only a fraction of day-care costs. (To guard against perverse incentives, benefits have to be phased out gradually, so paying all expenses for a family making $15,000 implies paying a small fraction of them for a family making, say, $25,000.) In that light, ABC's income ceiling is no more than $5,000 above the mark. Still, lowering it by that much is worth the trouble: the money saved could be spent on the truly needy.

The larger problem is the term "median income." It suggests that day-care assistance is something the average American deserves, thus substantiating conservative fears that ABC is the camel's nose under the tent. Moreover, it highlights the paradox at the heart of the day-care lobby: they want subsidized day care for the "average" American. But where will the money come from? As always, from the "average" taxpayer—in other words, out of one pocket and into the other. There are cases—public education, for example—where taxing Peter to pay Peter makes sense, but no one's demonstrated that day care is one of them.

Of ABC's several flaws, the most disappointing is the failure to mandate an educational component of day care. Here is a prime opportunity to bring the benefits of a Head Start-type program to many more poor, and some near-poor children. And ABC wastes it.

ABC's architects haven't neglected an educational requirement out of any aversion to government regulation. The bill would set ceilings on child-staff ratios, increase salaries, mandate initial and annual training for staff, etc. Most of this makes sense. But the bill's authors might usefully have borne in mind the lesson of the public schools teaching crisis: all the specialized training in the world won't make up for common sense and commitment. Better (and cheaper) than mandatory training would be a "basic skills" day-care test. This approach has a second advantage, too: the veteran grandmother down the street—who now needs no license but will need one to get ABC money—would be less likely to retire in fear of red tape if getting a day-care license were just like getting a driver's license.

Given ABC's deficiencies, the choice is between major surgery and simply tearing it up and starting over. Either way, what is needed is a program generally like ABC but specifically unlike it: something that tightens day-care licensing requirements, but doesn't drive neighborhood grandmothers out of business; something that ensures the healthy development of children, but acknowledges that intellectual development is critical; something that spends lots of money on lower-income families, but embodies a clear understanding of why.

ROBERT WRIGHT

A wrong cure for the Teamsters.

UNION SUIT

I HAVE A friend, a New York lawyer, whose client, a Teamster dissident, was recently shot and killed at work. Several clients of mine have been beaten up for defying the Teamsters. So I can sympathize with the government's suit to put the Teamsters Union in trusteeship. Still, it is a bad idea.

RICO, the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act, permits the government to seek a court order to "reorganize" an "enterprise" controlled or influenced by organized crime. The Teamsters Union surely qualifies. Over the years the government has obtained over 340 criminal convictions of Teamster officials and others who have used the union for racketeering. The government's suit lists 20 murders, 12 of political dissidents. It could not list the hundreds of savage beatings. Yet as sickening as the violence is, it is not the worst part. The worst is the way the union, every day, is just a dues-collecting machine and does not represent the membership at all.

For over 35 years the Teamsters Union has been perhaps this country's biggest, longest-running scandal. Nothing has really changed since Robert Kennedy's day, except the names of the criminal defendants. The problem of organized crime in labor is one of the simplest public policy problems to solve, and Congress could do so anytime it liked. But it does not. Before U.S. Attorney Rudolph Giuliani filed the RICO suit, 246 members of Congress, mostly Democrats, had already signed a letter denouncing it. No doubt Teamster PAC contributions helped, but the problem goes deeper. Though the Democratic Party does little for labor, it is extremely protective of the people who dole out the money from the union PACs; and if there is a growing mob corruption in labor, it may start to seep into the Democratic Party itself.

Republican Senator Orrin Hatch, who is also a Teamster defender, appearing on TV with beads of sweat pouring down his face, says the government should just keep bringing "individual" prosecutions. The government has already won 340 of them. How many more do we need? The problem is with the top of the Teamsters Union. Not once, not even when there are criminal convictions, has the Teamster Executive Board stepped into a corrupt local, taken any disciplinary action, done anything to kick out the mob.

As former Teamster President Roy Williams has testified, the mob controls the election of Teamster presidents. Both he and Jackie Presser were hand-picked by the mob. The deal, historically, is that the mob puts a Presser or Williams into office and, in return, gets a free hand to run certain locals. For decades the Provenzanos could run Local 560 in New Jersey like Murder, Inc., and every Teamster leader looked the other way.

Of the last five Teamster presidents, four were indicted

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for racketeering or related offenses. Of the four, three were convicted, and the fourth, Jackie Presser, was awaiting trial at the time of his death. But it is impossible to clean up the Teamsters this way. In fact, after Presser's death, the Executive Board passed over Weldon Mathis, the heir apparent, who had a "cleaner," more mainstream image, and picked William McCarthy, an unknown who was supported by the worst regions of the union, like New York and Cleveland.

So in the RICO suit the government seeks a court-appointed "monitor" who would have the Executive Board's authority in disciplinary matters. It also seeks to remove every current officer of the board. Giuliani claims that he does not want a full-scale trusteeship and that the union could go on with collective bargaining, but it is not clear who would be left to run the union. By default, the "monitor" would end up the top capo, the boss of all bosses.

ANY GOVERNMENT takeover of a union is troubling. It has also been depressing over the past year to see the Presser crowd wrap itself in the Constitution. Even if the government's suit does not do what Jaruzelski did to the Poles, it still has a whiff of martial law. Some people look aghast at both sides and wonder if there is a third side they can take.

There is. The government could require rank-and-file elections and count the ballots. No trusteeship, no takeover, just a court order giving the Teamster members the right to vote and letting the government supervise the next few elections.

When I mention to friends that in the Teamsters—and in most unions—the rank and file cannot now vote for their top officers, they think I'm kidding. But it's true. Except for the Mine Workers and Steelworkers, union presidents scrapped direct elections years ago, in favor of delegate conventions. In the Teamsters the indirect, delegate-convention system has been the mob's means of control.

Try to imagine old Whig England, corrupt boroughs, patronage, indirect elections, and you get a flavor of what most labor leaders mean by "union democracy." There are no national campaigns, no national candidacies to mobilize voters. Leaders change, if ever, only by palace coups. Indeed, the system is set up to prevent wholesale changes in leadership; at conventions only the leaders have the votes that count.

Members of the Teamsters don't even elect all the delegates. Many of them attend "ex officio," as local union officers. The mob simply has to control a few big-city locals, in New York, Kansas City, or Cleveland. Then, with a bloc of delegates, it can go to the convention as a kingmaker and pick off all the other kingmakers.

The RICO suit does not propose to change any of this. Union democracy, as a political issue, is so far off the map in official Washington that a rank-and-file remedy cannot even get a polite hearing. So far a Teamster rank-and-file group, Teamsters for a Democratic Union, is almost alone in supporting it.

Yet every other remedy is known to be doomed. In the 1950s the government tried a trusteeship, or "monitorship," of the Teamsters Union. A long, messy lawsuit only succeeded in making political heroes out of Jimmy Hoffa and his pals, and when the "monitorship" ended, they were stronger than ever. Recently, as a warm-up to the big RICO case, the government tried trusteeships in a few local unions. They are not working. In the Provenzano local, the trusteeship is now two years old, and a court may have to cancel an upcoming election, because there is still no alternative to the Provenzano man. The government is stuck in a trusteeship that may never end.

In fact, in the year before Presser's death, when everything else went wrong for him, the threat of trusteeship was his political ace in the hole. As one Teamster observer said, "For the first time, at Presser's rallies, you saw members who had *not* been paid to show up." The government's suit seems designed to self-destruct: it would impose a trusteeship, which alienates members, and would keep the conventions, which perpetuate mob control.

IN THE LAST 30 years there has been only one hopeful precedent, only one union that has rid itself of a criminal leadership. In 1972, in a rank-and-file election, the Mine Workers voted out Tony Boyle, who had murdered Jock Yablonski and his family. Coal miners, and not the Justice Department, cleaned up the UMW. With the Mine Workers the rank and file already had the right to vote, and to get rid of Boyle, the government only had to supervise the election.

That election can be a model for the Teamsters. Under RICO, the government could ask the court to require rank-and-file elections on a permanent basis. Then it could supervise the next three or four such elections, at three-year intervals.

Some experts say that even with government supervision, the Teamsters would simply re-elect the mob. The incumbents, after all, would have an overwhelming advantage in resources. And some just have a nasty feeling that, well . . . Teamster members are thugs too.

It is far from clear, however, that the old crowd would win, even in the first election. In three recent Teamster contract votes, large majorities, up to 70 percent, have voted against the leadership position. And that's with the *union officers* counting the vote. Government supervision would only increase the opposition vote.

No matter who wins, rank-and-file elections would change the Teamsters Union dramatically. The mob would become superfluous, even a liability. The mob cannot shake down 1.6 million Teamster voters. The mob cannot count the votes, steal the votes, or pick the winner. If the government truly supervises the election, the mob cannot even give away its money ("outsider" contributions violate federal law).

Teamsters, like most Americans, do not knowingly vote for felons. Under the current system, with its perverse incentives, a Teamster politician almost encourages the perception he is cozy with the mob. An indictment, if anything, is a political asset. But in rank-and-file elections, Teamster leaders would be trying to distance themselves

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from the mob. The very threat of a rank-and-file election would change the behavior of a Williams, a Presser, or, perhaps, a William McCarthy.

Of course, the political culture of the Teamsters would not change overnight. The mob, after all, has run the union for over 40 years, and a whole generation of leaders has come to power under the arrangement. But in ten to 15 years the Teamsters Union would be unrecognizable.

If the government chose this remedy, it would be hard to contain. If rank-and-file elections were good for the Teamsters, people would ask, "What about other unions too?" In fact, the government might bring such suits for other mob-influenced unions, like the Laborers. But then people might ask, "Why bring such suits at all?" Congress could just institutionalize the remedy: require rank-and-file elections under some neutral supervision. It would be the rank-and-file's Civil Rights Act, their own 17th Amendment, and the end of the mob, the capos, the stage-managed delegate conventions, the whole rotten creaking union election machinery.

But for now, Congress refuses. It would be unfair to the union presidents, the "good" ones. They would have to run for office too, and some of them might lose. So over the long term, the mob is fairly safe. Not even Senator Edward Kennedy, chairman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, would ever openly support rank-and-file elections in the Teamsters. Kennedy surely has no use for the Teamster leadership, so it is a measure of labor's power that even he would give them this much aid and comfort.

But the Democrats had better start thinking about the consequences of their stand. With the Teamsters back in the AFL-CIO, the mob-influenced unions—the Teamsters, the Laborers, and others—may now have enough votes to pick Lane Kirkland's successor. It is a ghastly prospect, one that could turn organized labor into a cesspool. And if that happens, the Democratic Party, with its close ties to labor, could become something of a cesspool too. Is this the kind of party that Michael Dukakis wants?

THOMAS GEOGHEGAN

Thomas Geoghegan is a Chicago lawyer who has represented dissident Teamsters.

California I.

BOREDOM IS TRENDY

Los Angeles

It's a myth that Californians demand politicians with pizzazz. Today the state's most popular officials are defiantly, unrepentantly, dull. Two-term Republican Governor George Deukmejian has so little charisma that even George Bush jokes about it. The only color that Democratic Senator Alan Cranston ever displayed was when he dyed his hair orange for an ill-fated 1984 presidential bid. The last lively statewide politician, former Governor Jerry Brown, ultimately drowned in all the ink his exploits produced.

On the charisma spectrum, Senator Pete Wilson, a Republican from San Diego up for re-election this fall, is somewhere between Deukmejian and Cranston. Wilson crushed Brown in their 1982 Senate race partly because his sedate personality and centrist positions seemed unlikely to inspire a parody in *Doonesbury*. Californians were exhausted from the frenetic adventures of Governor Moonbeam. The only moment of great drama in Wilson's first term came while he was flat on his back. Senate Republicans had him wheeled in from the hospital to cast the decisive vote on their 1986 budget.

For Wilson's challenger, the Democrats have chosen someone who isn't likely to outshine him: Lieutenant Governor Leo T. McCarthy, a veteran of Bay area politics and a former state Assembly Speaker. The party had little choice. The other ambitious statewide officials have their eyes on the 1990 governor's race, and no members of Congress thought running against Wilson looked promising.

McCarthy and Wilson have more in common than their unerring instinct for the gray. Both are likable, serious, earthbound politicians (neither is strong on what George Bush calls "the vision thing") who have a basic problem: voters don't know much about them. In a recent poll by the Field Institute in San Francisco, only two-thirds of voters had any opinion of Wilson, and those impressions, though generally positive, were vague. "You get a very generalized response about Wilson," said Mark J. DiCamillo of the institute. "People say: 'I think he has done a good job,' although they don't specify what he has done." Although McCarthy's been a powerful figure in state government for 15 years, he draws no stronger a response.

Which means that this year, as in 1986, the Senate race in California will be a contest between the two campaigns to define their man and raise doubts about his opponent. And in a state this big, the best way to do that is through endless fusillades of television commercials. It's time to gather around the TV set again: another uniquely California political season has begun.

BECAUSE THE TAB on television runs up so fast, money plays an even bigger role here than in most states. In former Representative Ed Zschau's unsuccessful 1986 Senate bid, he spent more money than any other Senate candidate. Cranston, who narrowly won, was a close second. Cranston's campaign team, which spent the money on deftly aimed negative ads, is handling McCarthy this year. But it's Wilson who's been best able to apply the lessons of 1986. He's raised money early and heavily, and rushed it onto the air, trying to set pre-emptively the terms of the debate, just as Cranston did.

Through the first three months of this year, Wilson had raised more money than any senator except Lloyd

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Bentsen (who has the advantage of being chairman of the Finance Committee) and had spent $2 million more than any of his colleagues. He's likely to have unloaded at least $12 million by election day. Though McCarthy's fund-raising hasn't gone badly, that's much more than he's likely to have available. Wilson has made inroads into the Democratic fund-raising base that will make it hard for McCarthy to keep up. Through staunch support for Israel, Wilson has undercut the traditional Democratic financial pull in the Jewish community. At the national level, McCarthy has been virtually shut out by pro-Israel political action committees, and locally his situation isn't much better. He's convinced some Jewish donors backing Wilson also to contribute to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, some of whose funds filter into his campaign. But Wilson is virtually guaranteed not to lose the Jewish money race, and for a Republican that's a real accomplishment.

WILSON HAS ALSO invaded Democratic turf in Hollywood. It's common to think of Hollywood's political involvement as irremediably liberal, altruistic, and ethereal. But Hollywood is also a huge business whose fortunes are affected by decisions in Washington, and Wilson has been unstinting in helping the industry. He went to bat for the producers to prevent the Federal Communications Commission from allowing television networks to share profits from the syndication of studio-produced shows; fought to keep foreign countries from pirating films and videocassettes; and inserted in the 1986 tax reform bill transition rules that helped several studios benefit from the investment tax credit during its final hours on earth.

In April eight very senior studio executives—including not only Republicans such as independent producer Jerry Weintraub and Paramount Chairman Frank Mancuso but Democrats such as Fox Chairman Barry Diller (a Dukakis fund-raiser) and Disney's Michael Eisner (one of Senator Bill Bradley's principal Hollywood money men)—fired off a glowing endorsement of Wilson, calling him "our champion." Eisner followed up by hosting a fund-raiser.

The executives' rush to Wilson has peeved Hollywood liberals. Rock manager Danny Goldberg, a liberal activist, accuses the studio heads of an "AIPAC mentality" that binds them to Wilson because he's supported their parochial agenda—even though they disagree with him on other matters and know that McCarthy would be just as accommodating on industry concerns. "They start out trying to co-opt the legislators to vote like them, and they end up being co-opted," Goldberg says. McCarthy hasn't been shut out of Hollywood; Norman Lear, Marvin Davis, and Michael Douglas have hosted fund-raisers, and the Hollywood Women's Political Committee, which is preparing an ad condemning the producers' Wilson endorsement, plans to make McCarthy a prime beneficiary of a fund-raising gala. But Wilson unquestionably has cut into McCarthy's take from the entertainment world. Combined with his incursions into the Jewish community, this may have shrunk McCarthy's financial base by a million dollars.

Wilson has been similarly aggressive in courting other Democratic constituencies, notably environmentalists. On the state's two most visible environmental issues—constraining air pollution and offshore oil drilling—Wilson gets high marks. He's been especially nimble in moving against Occidental Petroleum's attempt to drill in the Pacific Palisades. Though McCarthy also opposes drilling, his position is complicated by the fact that his media consultants, David Doak and Robert M. Shrum, are shaping Occidental's p.r. campaign. Wilson won't attract much support from dedicated environmentalists, who consider his overall record only mediocre and claim McCarthy as one of their own. But they're a narrow group. At the very least, Wilson has ensured that the environment won't hurt him much, if at all, in the broader electorate.

Wilson has inoculated himself on social issues through his support of the Equal Rights Amendment and his opposition to restricting access to abortions. In San Francisco he has stood with local unions against liberal politicians (including McCarthy) and peace activists who oppose the Navy's plan to make the bay home for the U.S.S. *Missouri*, which could create thousands of jobs.

IN THE LAST Field poll Wilson led McCarthy by almost 20 points. Still, his support stands at only about 50 percent, not a commanding position for an incumbent. As the race progresses he'll face problems on his record, particularly several votes to cut or eliminate Social Security cost-of-living increases. And Wilson has a more fundamental weakness, McCarthy's advisers believe: what he *hasn't* done. With the funds they're husbanding for the final weeks of the campaign, they hope to paint him as an ineffective senator who, distracted by his deference to movie moguls and defense contractors, hasn't delivered for ordinary voters.

Against a well-funded incumbent, that kind of generalized political argument needs added impetus. So the race may well come to be a test of how strong the winds of change are in 1988. Like the country, California is in a curious economic mood, satisfied with the present but uneasy about the future. Even in a state dependent on trade, voters are concerned about the increasing foreign economic presence. Democrats hope that Michael Dukakis's large lead over George Bush in recent statewide surveys implies a demand for new direction. With that in mind, McCarthy is doing something not many Democrats have done in the past two decades: eagerly grabbing the presidential nominee's coattails. If Dukakis can't sell the argument for change here, many Democrats believe, McCarthy's doomed.

They're probably right. But there remains one wild card in this race. The cascade of scandals pouring onto the front pages—beginning with the pious duplicity of Ivan Boesky and Oliver North, progressing to the sordid doings of Attorney General Edwin Meese and House Speaker Jim Wright, and culminating in the systemic greed of Spentagon—may yet bode ill for incumbents everywhere. Wilson's own ethics haven't been questioned. Still, "there is a

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growing feeling among voters that there are some problems, real problems, that have not been addressed in the past eight years," said Democratic pollster Paul Maslin, who is advising McCarthy. "If they link that with a sense that the politicians are only in it for themselves . . . you have a mood that is not going to be conducive to voting for an incumbent."

RONALD BROWNSTEIN

Ronald Brownstein is the West Coast correspondent of the *National Journal*.

California II.

INITIATIVE MADNESS

Sacramento

Ever since Hiram Johnson got the initiative process written into the California constitution back in 1911, this device for bypassing the legislature and submitting propositions directly to the voters has been a time bomb waiting to blow. From 1922 to 1978 there was no year in which more than ten initiatives got enough signatures to be placed on the ballot and no decade in which more than nine were actually passed. But with the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 the late Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann, Prop. 13's backers, along with their commercial direct-mail contractors, discovered how to work the process—for signatures, for votes, and for big dollars. The result has been an eruption of initiatives that is rapidly crippling representative government.

To get a measure on the ballot in California requires valid signatures from five percent of the voters (eight percent for a constitutional amendment). Currently that's 375,000 (600,000) signatures, and thus something one would assume isn't undertaken lightly. But with commercial signature-gatherers and modern direct-mail technology, enough money will get almost anything on the ballot. (The average cost is now about $1 million a crack.) In the decade since 1978, 17 initiatives have been passed, on every conceivable subject, including one a few years ago instructing the governor to inform the president that California supported the nuclear freeze. That's more than in the 40 previous years combined, and 12 more are to be voted on in the fall.

In all, Californians will have voted on 18 initiatives this year, plus 23 other matters—bond proposals, constitutional amendments—placed on the ballot by the legislature, for a grand total of 41 items. Those measures cover not just minor issues such as the election of county assessors but enormously complicated and important ones such as changes in California's rigid limit on state and local spending (itself the result of an initiative passed back in 1979), about which there were two competing measures on the June ballot. To say that this causes confusion is an understatement. One initiative approved in June calls for public funding of legislative election campaigns; another prohibits it.

Other states have the initiative, but none of them has taken up the practice with such a vengeance. The likely explanation has something to do with California's huge size, the impersonality of its media politics, and the rootlessness of its voters. These California voters—especially the old—are especially susceptible to the electronic and computerized campaign technologies that have been developed in the past decade and the profits that can be made through them. Whatever the cause, there is now a whole initiative culture, with its own technology and its own institutions, gradually replacing the institutions of representative democracy.

AT THE CORE of that technology is the computerized direct-mail system developed in the early 1980s by commercial campaign consulting firms such as Butcher-Forde, Inc., of Newport Beach, which was often indistinguishable from Jarvis himself. BFI managed a half dozen of Jarvis's post-Proposition 13 campaigns: a campaign to reduce the state income tax by half, another to remove Chief Justice Rose Bird from office, and still others to close the loopholes, as Jarvis saw them, that were written into Prop. 13 by the liberal Bird court. Each campaign was based on mass mailings to a list, constantly updated, of more than one million faithful contributors and petition signers Jarvis had collected for his original property tax cut measures in 1978.

Jarvis and his people used those mailings to collect both signatures and money. Along the way, they learned to make each look so much like a document from an official agency that some recipients mistakenly sent Jarvis their property tax payments. "Property Tax" was printed on one mailer in large letters, "Statement Enclosed. Do Not Destroy." "Important Voter Information Enclosed, please open immediately," said another. A mailing to 800,000 people last December, nearly two years after Jarvis's death, used his name and picture and promised a "1987 Property Tax Analysis." It also asked for $20 to help pass "the new Proposition 13."

Nobody knows who actually thought up the various post-Prop. 13 Jarvis campaigns or how much, if anything, Jarvis was paid. Many California initiative drives still gather signatures the old-fashioned way—at tables in shopping malls—but even these usually employ commercial signature-gathering firms that get 50 or 60 cents a signature. More sophisticated initiative campaigns are marketed like a commercial product, beginning with a test mailing to see if the product has appeal before rolling out a major effort. No money is ever refunded, even if the campaign is aborted. When Jarvis gave up his drive to defeat Bird early in 1986, and let others do the job, he and his contractors had collected $1 million, nearly all of it in contributions of $10 to $25 apiece, but had virtually nothing left in the till. Like one of those creatures that's almost

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all reproductive organs, everything raised had gone into the mailings to raise still more.

Initiatives that aren't the brainchild of the initiative industry itself tend to be the creatures of other industries, often operating more or less incognito. Four years ago an organization calling itself Californians for Better Schools ran a successful initiative campaign to establish a California lottery, one-third of whose proceeds were to go to education. All but $59,000 of the organization's $1.1 million budget came from one gaming industry corporation. Most of that money, in turn, went to F. G. Kimball Petition Management Inc., a firm that says it has qualified more than 50 initiatives and referenda around the country. Similarly, a few years ago the tobacco industry successfully opposed an initiative setting up smoke-free sections in public places in the guise of Californians for Common Sense.

The left has jumped on the initiative bandwagon, and developed a few new techniques of its own. One of the initiatives that passed in June required the state to issue $776 million in bonds to acquire new land for state and local parks. The statewide Planning and Conservation League, which sponsored the initiative, asked local groups that wanted a particular park included on the list to raise money or collect signatures in proportion to the dollar value of their desired projects: 5,000 signatures or $2,500 per million dollars of parkland in its area. Critics called this "park barrel."

Now this same parkland advocacy organization is putting $50,000 into supporting an initiative on the November ballot that would increase the state's cigarette tax and use the money for medical services and health research. In return, five percent of the tobacco tax—about $32 million a year—will (if it passes) be devoted to parks and wildlife.

ALTHOUGH HOWARD JARVIS got a flinty look from some California judges, there is nothing illegal about most of this. A lot of reforms have been proposed—prohibiting or limiting commercial signature-gatherers, requiring fuller disclosure of the real proponents or opponents of initiative campaigns, requiring legislative hearings before an initiative can go on the ballot—but none has gone very far. Californians may not be passionate about the initiative, but no one is willing to change it, especially at a time when the conventional wisdom portrays the legislature as being so ineffective.

And that makes for a vicious cycle. Because so many of the initiatives passed by California voters in the past decade in some way restrict the leeway of elected officials—most obviously by imposing tax and spending limits—it becomes harder for the legislature to act on or to evaluate competing budgetary demands in any reasonable form. The result has been an accumulating set of often expensive Rube Goldberg devices—developer fees, per-parcel taxes, utility taxes, special assessment districts—to try (with very limited success) to get around the limits. Each of those devices makes it harder for the public to determine who controls what or how the system works.

And so, in turn, the temptation to resort to the initiative and other plebiscitary devices—what someone called ballot-box budgeting—becomes all the greater. In June there were 50 tax measures on local ballots in California earmarked for specific purposes—schools, libraries, jails, cops, transportation, and so on.

There used to be a comforting theory that if enough money were spent in opposition to an initiative, even one that was popular at the outset, it could be beaten at the polls, while the reverse—carrying a weak measure with a lot of money—was believed not to be possible. But the insurance industry is expected to spend $43 million testing that theory in November in a multi-initiative fight over auto insurance reform. That would make it the most expensive political campaign (other than the presidential) in American history. Certainly money has become as big a player in the initiative process as it ever was in the halls of the legislature in the worst robber-baron days, and maybe bigger.

Hiram Johnson and his Progressives regarded the initiative as a way of wrestling control from "the interests"—specifically the Southern Pacific Railroad—and restoring it to the people. But when voters are asked to evaluate 25 or 30 separate and sometimes conflicting ballot measures, often on the basis of a 30-second television commercial, they are getting not more democracy but less.

PETER SCHRAG

Peter Schrag is editorial page editor of the *Sacramento Bee*.

The joke's on Stanford.

CANON FODDER

JUST ABOUT everything, one would think, has already been said about Stanford University's impending curricular reform, which will drop some classics of Western culture from a required undergraduate course and replace them with works by "women, minorities, and persons of color." But one point has not received much attention: these changes almost certainly will not fulfill the underlying goals of the black students who initiated and led the reform movement.

I concentrate on the demands and hopes of black students, rather than "minority" students in general, because the interests of students of different minority groups are not the same, even if some of those involved in the movement were Hispanic and Asian American. The heritage of Hispanic students, for example, is both "European" and "Western," so they could have been satisfied within the traditional framework of Western classics. In fact, the full range of Hispanic and Latin American literature can be studied in any major American university.

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Nor are the interests of Asian American students—more numerous at Stanford, as at almost every major American university, than either blacks or Hispanics—the same as those of the black and Hispanic students. Whereas black and Hispanic students complain that the university is overly impressed by academic qualifications and does not reach far enough down into the pool of the less qualified to get larger numbers of minority students, Asian American students have the opposite complaint: that the university is *not* sufficiently impressed by their high academic credentials, that it *does* reach too far down into the applicant pool to get black and Hispanic students, ignoring better qualified Asian students. (In 1986, 14.1 percent of California high school graduates met the entrance requirements for the University of California: 33 percent of the Asians, 16 percent of the whites, 5 percent of Hispanics, 4.5 percent of blacks.)

One doubts that the majority of Asian students cared much about *what* was in the Western Civilization syllabus. Many are headed for science, engineering, and medicine, and such students do not generally get involved in controversies over the humanities curriculum. One suspects that, like the Jewish students in the 1920s and 1930s, they couldn't care less what was in the required courses in the selective universities. Their concern was to get in, and they would do well enough whatever the curriculum was.

CLEARLY, THEN, the problem at Stanford was mainly one that black students felt. But in the end, blacks will get little out of the solution. The Stanford faculty voted to pare down the required Western Culture reading list to selections from the Old and New Testaments, Plato, St. Augustine, Machiavelli, Rousseau, and Marx, and to add works by "women, minorities, and persons of color," concentrating on "at least one non-European culture" and giving "substantial attention to issues of race, gender, and class." In implementing these changes, the faculty is likely to do two things: introduce a good number of works by women, and turn to the classics of China, India, and Japan.

The reason is simple. There are substantial and growing numbers of women teaching in the humanities and social sciences, many focusing on feminist themes of one type or another. But despite the presence of black studies programs in every major university, the number of black faculty in the major research universities remains minuscule—about two percent as against 25 percent or so for women. There is also a ready academic agenda available for expanding a list of required readings into the classics of the major Asian cultures, and many academics are qualified to teach them. Yet it is unlikely that many faculty members will select sub-Saharan Africa as the non-European culture to be studied. It would be hard to find central and formative literature from that region, works that could stand with the Old and New Testament, with Plato and St. Augustine (who, incidentally, was an African geographically), with Confucius, and the *Bhagavad Gita*. One could find some excellent novels, autobiographies, and collections of folk tales, but it is clear that they would be of a different order of significance from the "Western" classics.

The problem here is a lack of parallelism between complaint and solution, between what angers and frustrates black students on campus and what they demand as a response. The principal frustration is that on the basis of the qualifications that roughly determine entry to selective colleges, blacks are underrepresented, and a good number who do get in have academic difficulties. A straightforward demand for quotas (which, of course, already operate in the admissions process) is demeaning, and contradicts the commitment of blacks as university students to universal values. They have thus shaped their demand on the basis of academic values: the list of Western classics, they charged, reflects an ethnocentric exclusivism.

In truth, the curriculum in American universities and colleges already includes much on black themes and black concerns. In American history, for example, the problems of slavery, Reconstruction, and the civil rights movement must and do play a large role. In almost any sociology course minority issues will be central. The literature produced by American blacks is now studied at almost every college and university. Hundreds of black studies programs exist, and no major institution is without one. Will more of the same matter?

When one contrasts what is already available to blacks with what was available, for example, to Jewish students when they were considered a minority, the bounty is overwhelming. And when one looks at what is available to Hispanic and Asian students, blacks still fare very well. The Hispanic and Asian students may, if they wish, study the cultures of Spain and Asia, but there is little about their own concrete particularity as minorities on the American scene. I am not suggesting that things should be otherwise. Blacks play a central role in American history and culture; Hispanic and Asian Americans do not. My point is simply that history and contemporary experience strongly suggest that doing well in college has little to do with learning about one's ethnic group in college.

PERHAPS BLACKS feel sufficient kinship with Asian cultures and with the problems of women to find satisfaction in the new curriculum as it is likely to develop. Bill King, leader of the black students, seems to believe that the Old Testament and the Greek thinkers, properly taught, will lead him to black Africa: in his speech to the faculty Senate, as reported by James Atlas in an article in the *New York Times Magazine*, he asked why he had never been taught that Socrates, Herodotus, Pythagoras, and Solomon owed much of what they knew to African culture in Egypt, or that many of Solomon's words were borrowed from the black Pharaoh Amen-En-Eope.

But his plea to be taught the links between African history and the cultures of Egypt and ancient Israel and Greece are likely to fall on deaf ears. The people who teach about these subjects will be quite skeptical that much in these cultures can be traced to black Africa, even if some professors are accommodating when a black student suggests such connections.

Black students at Stanford raised a demand that has

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legitimacy. There is more to culture than Western culture, and one might well explore the standard list of classics for expansion and replacement. It's happened before, and it will happen again. (Who in American colleges and universities taught Tocqueville and Marx before the 1950s?) But if the experience of other minorities is any guide, what troubles black students will not find any balm in curricular changes. These will not help bring more black students to elite colleges and universities, and will not do anything to improve their record when they get there.

NATHAN GLAZER

Nathan Glazer is professor of education and sociology at Harvard University and the author of, among other books, *Ethnic Dilemmas* (Harvard University Press).

A Washington success story.

SHAMELA

BY HENRY FAIRLIE

AN ENGLISH WOMAN of a certain age and varied but vivid repute, lately widowed, came to Washington not so long ago and married one of the oldest and wealthiest men in town, also recently widowed. This mission accomplished, Pamela Digby Churchill Hayward Harriman, her name inflated with each husband, looked around for a charity she could adopt, so making herself seem serious and useful. She sensibly saw that cancer, multiple sclerosis, and the rest were old hat, and anyhow were the domain of rival widows—as she could actuarially be confident of finding herself in the foreseeable future. So she searched for some neglected invalids and in 1980 spotted the Democratic Party—dismembered by Ronald Reagan, evicted from the White House and Senate, palsied, mentally disturbed, shunned as if it were leprous, and with no prospect of holding an inaugural ball. Pamela Harriman undertook to supply the balls. She formed her own charity, Democrats for the '80s, otherwise known as Pam-PAC.

The fable of Pamela Harriman's ascendance suggests a moral about the willingness of the elect and the elected of Washington to prostrate themselves before great wealth and glamour. The nature of her trade with Washington, which takes place across the corpse of her most recent husband, is concealed by her elevation as a Very Serious Person. This was finally accomplished when a few months ago she gave the Samuel D. Berger Memorial Lecture at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University. There is nothing wrong with the address, which was read into the *Congressional Record* by Senator Claiborne Pell, by the standards of other Washington lectures. Sentence by sentence the bromides issue with lapidary unction, thanks partly to Richard Holbrooke, who helped to construct this memorial to Pamela Harriman's apotheosis. But one is left wondering both why she was invited to speak and why she was willing to perform the charade. A highly intelligent woman with some care for her reputation would not agree to pronounce froth like: "But we can, and I believe we must, forge a new sense of mutual trust and comity. . . ." Not even she can talk of "comity" in the normal course of her day.

Pecuniary corruption has existed in all systems of government. But there is a deeper corruption here. In a city where politics is virtually the only form of entertainment, the intrigue and manipulation are robed in the snobbish pretense to culture and good taste.

The most memorable of the Widows of Washington is Mrs. Lightfoot Lee, the heroine of Henry Adams's novel *Democracy*. Madeleine Lee came to Washington five years after her husband's death. "Though not brighter than her neighbors, the world persisted in classing her among clever women; she had wealth." She had "lost her taste for New York," and "felt no interest in the price of stocks, and very little in the men who dealt in them." Her motive in choosing Washington was well defined: "She wanted to . . . touch with her own hand the massive machinery of society; to measure with her own mind the capacity of the motive power. She was bent upon getting to the heart of the great American mystery of democracy and government. . . . What she wanted was POWER." So she took a house on Lafayette Square, redecorated it to her taste, and settled to her ambition. She was "an eminently respectable Philadelphian by birth, . . . and her husband had been equally irreproachable, a descendant of one branch of the Virginia Lees."

Pamela Digby had an equally auspicious start, being born the daughter of the 11th and 4th Baron Digby. (The older and more respectable barony exists only in the Irish peerage.) An ancestor, Sir Kenelm Digby, fancied himself a scientist and was chiefly renowned for publicizing the "powder of sympathy," which was supposed to heal wounds without direct application—a useful balm that his descendant appears to have brought to the Democratic Party along with her naturalization papers (the only gift, she has said, she could think of giving her third husband, a man who, with $75 million to bequeath to her, had everything).

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"My sister Pamela," her sister, Sheila Digby Moore, told Marie Brenner of *Vanity Fair*, "decided early on she was going to turn herself into a very glamorous person. She had a lot of ambition." We can be sure her ambition never included emulation of another ancestor, Sir Everard Digby, whose Catholic faith led to his execution for his role in the Gunpowder Plot. In her progress from capital to capital, Pamela Digby has never lost her head. Her father was a caricature of a minor peer, a dairy farmer who cultivated rhododendrons on the family's estate of Minterne, near Dorchester. Dairy farming is virtuous, but milk was not what Pamela Digby craved.

After a blind date and two further assignations with Randolph Churchill, the older but still handsome son of Winston Churchill, Pamela Digby engaged to marry him, thus uniting the Digbys and the Barons Aberdare, her mother's family, with the great ducal house (Blenheim Palace, to be exact) of the Marlboroughs. Winston Churchill was nowhere near wealthy until after the war; in the 1930s he earned his living by journalism, as did his son. All the same, to attach the noble name of Churchill to her own was not a poor achievement for a "country bumpkin" (her description) of 19 who had left her finishing school in Germany just as war was breaking out.

No one would have advised any girl to marry Randolph Churchill. But, although a bad drunk, a poor politician, and capable of outrageous rudeness to men, women, and children, he was not otherwise a slob. And the articles about Pamela Harriman that describe Randolph as "a second-rate journalist" are wide of the mark. I was a political journalist in Britain when he was at the height of his powers, and if we knew that Randolph was on a story we feared to open his paper the next day. He had a formidable courage, even if it was often wasted, and his loyalties were never betrayed. When I flew into Cape Town with him in 1960, he put on the entry paper we had to sign: "Race: Human," and where it asked if he had any non-Caucasian blood, he wrote: "Red Indian," since the Churchills claim to be descended from Pocahontas. He was detained at the airport.

Apart from the Churchill name, Pamela gained entrance to the highest social and political circles in Britain, Europe, and America, including Winston Churchill and, during the war, Averell Harriman. Moreover, to be anywhere near Randolph was to be given an education in politics as a high adventure of privacy not to be had elsewhere. Pamela Churchill also acquired a son, Winston Churchill, who cannot be said to be a chip off the old block of either his father or his grandfather. Still, it's not a poor name for one's son.

PAMELA DIGBY CHURCHILL has traveled a long way since then: the divorce from Randolph; the marriage to producer Leland Hayward and her reign in New York; and the countless men, all powerful or wealthy, mostly both, with whom her name has been freely associated over the years, the publicity and scandals appearing to be a cause less of grief than of self-congratulation. The men she floored (sometimes literally, it seems; a trick she cannot have learned in Dorset) have paid otiose testimony, as if in explanation, to her white skin.

Mrs. Lightfoot Lee's main suitor in Washington was Senator Silas P. Ratcliffe of Illinois, more powerful than the president. Since he applies "his usual theory of political corruption . . . to feminine weaknesses," he was "only puzzled at finding how high a price Mrs. Lee set on herself." The price was not money, or even in the end power; it was integrity—above all, in the Washington of her hopes, political integrity. That is not a price Pamela Harriman seems to have demanded of her suitors. The education of Pamela Harriman—though if told truthfully it would make a titillating best-seller—has yielded more traditional instructions than *The Education of Henry Adams*.

E. A. HARRIMAN was one of the uglier thugs among the railroad magnates, and they were among the uglier of all the robber barons. But with whatever corruptions and brutality an American fortune has been amassed, it is laundered within one generation. The money sticks, but not the filth. Harriman's son Averell could stand forth as a selfless servant of the public. No one ever questioned by what means the money inherited by Averell Harriman was gained, and no one would now expect his widow to reject such a fortune, as Mrs. Lee finally rejected Washington's standards, refusing to be "a mere worldly, ambitious woman, such as people think me." She says to Ratcliffe at the novel's climax: "I do not cling very closely to life, and do not value my own very highly, but I will not tangle it in such a way; I will not share in the profits of vice; I am not willing to be made a receiver of stolen goods, or be put in a position where I am perpetually obliged to maintain that immorality is a virtue." That is not the voice of Pamela Harriman.

Averell Harriman's previous wife, Marie, was a different figure. She was not a public person; she did not take up causes; she did not make speeches. In the late 1960s, through acquaintance with one of her friends, I had been using the Harrimans' pool. I was at a party in Georgetown one evening, a week after the *Washington Post* had picked up from the *Sunday Telegraph* in London a story I had written denouncing the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard as a kind of intellectuals' court in exile for those who were awaiting the restoration of the Kennedy dynasty in 1968 as it then was. At one point my host whispered in my ear, "The governor wants a word with you."

The room went silent and the Georgetown throng divided like the Red Sea to let the governor approach me. He was a tall man of impressive build even then, and he drew himself up above my mere five feet eleven inches. In a voice that would have reached the back of a convention hall without a microphone, Averell Harriman declaimed, "You mocked a president, his family, and all that Americans hold dear. You are no longer welcome in my office, my house, or my pool." Five minutes later Marie Harriman skipped up to me, and dragged me into the hall: "Don't pay any attention to Averell. Of course you can use the pool. I was the one who said that you could use it." But my Georgetown friend never took me there again.

Marie Harriman died a few months before Leland Hay-

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ward died, leaving a grieving widower and an ambitious widow, 29 years younger, to find their way to each other. With astonishing speed they met for the first time since the war and were married in September 1971. Harriman was then 80. With the self-delusion that is one of the hazards of being a governor, he had imagined in 1956 that he might be the Democratic candidate who would contest Eisenhower's appeal for a second term. Eisenhower, who had first known him in Europe during the war, said that Harriman was "a complete nincompoop . . . nothing but a Park Avenue Truman." Nothing in any meeting with Harriman, and little in the available accounts of his public service, gives one any reason for believing that Eisenhower was being altogether unfair. Harriman was one of those strange Washington figures who effortlessly acquire a reputation for wisdom and cunning. But Washington easily detects wisdom in $75 million.

When Pamela Harriman moved into the house on N Street in Georgetown, everything changed. Some of Harriman's relatives found that they were shut out, as later they were to find themselves cut out of the will. It was now a female voice that said: "You are no longer welcome." The $75 million has remained intact, give or take a nickel or two, because the name of Harriman does not carry with it any legend of generosity. There are Carnegie Public Libraries all over the country, and there are Rockefeller and other foundations. But E. A. Harriman's charity was more or less confined to $1 million and 10,000 acres of forest land in New York, which now compose one-quarter of the Harriman State Park. When his son sought the Democratic nomination, he loaned $2,500 to the campaign, and immediately took it back at the end. Harvard expected that as chairman of the board of the Kennedy School of Government, he would give money to it; he did not. Yale had a similar experience with perhaps its wealthiest alumnus when it appealed for funds for its endowment.

Nevertheless, as the Democratic Party crumbled on election night in 1980, when the old man in his 90th year had long since gone to bed, downstairs Pamela Harriman had an inexpressible vision that never came to Mrs. Lee on Lafayette Square. She saw where her duty lay. Able to command attention and even obeisance with her access to $75 million and her white skin, she was nonetheless still not taken seriously. So, by the immaculate conception that laundered wealth always eases in Washington, was born her PAC. But it is really only since she was widowed in 1986 that she has truly reigned. The $75 million is her own.

According to Holbrooke, Pamela Harriman has picked up the torch left by the governor. No one before had ever claimed that Averell Harriman carried any torch, and the image of this heroic leader of a Cause simply peels off him and his widow if one tries to attach it. But this is the sycophancy that attends Pamela Harriman in her progress through Washington. The *Washington Post* greeted the end of the Democratic convention by publishing at the top of its op-ed page an article by Pamela Harriman that was almost daring in its fatuousness. She had become the vehicle for assuring the Democrats they had a safe nominee.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Mrs. Lee's "first great political discovery in Washington" was that "to tie a prominent statesman to her train and lead him about like a tame bear" was "a more certain amusement than to tie herself to him." When she finally revolted against this degradation of herself, in rejecting the suit of Senator Ratcliffe when his corruption was exposed, her dismissal of him and of Washington was commanding: "Understand, once and for all that there is an impassable gulf between your life and mine. I do not doubt that you will make yourself president, but whatever or wherever you are, never speak to me or recognize me again." Pamela Harriman has chosen another path. No one believes that she would expel forever a suitor who had a fair chance of being president.

Mrs. Lee said finally: "The bitterest part of this horrid story is that nine out of ten of our countrymen would say I had made a mistake." Washington would agree if Pamela Harriman followed her example. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Journey to Jerusalem

Invited by the Jerusalem Cinematheque, I've just spent ten days at the Jerusalem Film Festival. This was my first visit to Israel, and it occurred at a time of heightened troubles. I offer no political comment; but I note a contradiction. Those troubles, which are at the forefront of any New York discussion of Israel today, seemed both less and more trenchant in my ten days. The Israelis I met, in the film world and out of it, were living their lives as they always did. I had to raise the subject in order to get the troubles discussed. But when they were discussed, the comments were frank and—inevitably—more subtle and knowledgeable than the readily available comments in New York.

As to the Festival itself, it really was festive. Unlike other festivals, it's neither a prize competition nor a marketplace: it's just a chance for Israelis to see a lot of new (and some old) interesting films that they might not otherwise see. During the ten days, 130 features from 14 countries were shown, of which I saw 21, but the dominant success for me was the sense of occasion. Flags of participating nations fluttered above the Cinematheque; the patio outside the main entrance was always jammed with people as the small band (or tapes) played continuously; the large café within was always crowded. So was every screening I attended. Besides the two theaters in the Cinematheque, two theaters elsewhere were used, so at any given time, four films were often available. The Festival had invited a couple of dozen guests from around the world. Luncheons and receptions and parties for them were plentiful. The whole ten days felt like a celebration of film.

The guiding spirit was Lia van Leer, Romanian-born, who has lived in this part of the world since 1939 and has been active in film societies and centers since Israel was founded. In 1981 the Cinematheque moved into its present lovely premises, on a slope facing Mount Zion. It has vaults with 8,000 copies of 5,000 films and a substantial book and periodical library. It runs multiple daily screenings year-round, along with numerous courses and community programs. Mrs. van Leer, who heads a staff of 42, initiated the Festival in 1984.

Guests have been invited every year, mostly makers of films that were being shown. This year was especially significant because, thanks to *glasnost*, a Soviet delegation attended. The group included Alexander Askoldov, the writer and director of *Commissar*, Nonna Mordukova, who played the title role, and Alexander Chernivsky, co-author of *Theme*. Both films (which have been reviewed here) were in the Festival. At the first luncheon for the guests, Shimon Peres, the foreign minister, was present and, with a translator, sat among the Russians. Conversation was lively, and after lunch Peres proposed a toast to amity. All of us joined. Later in the week there was a colloquium on national characteristics of film, with a panel that included Askoldov, Chernivsky, and myself. A touch less amity there—cordial differences about the merits of various films in the Festival.

Notes on some of the films I saw. Four of them formed two (presumably unplanned) pairs. Late adolescence in contemporary cities was the subject of a Taiwanese and a West German film. *Daughter of the Nile* (it's the name of a comic strip that a Taipei girl reads) was directed by Hou Hsiao-hsien with considerable sensitivity. *Then Nothing Was the Same Anymore*, set in West Berlin, was co-written and directed by Gerd Roman Frosch with considerable devotion to Antonioni, Godard, and Truffaut. If either had been the first—or the 15th—film on its subject, it would have been a stunner. But at least they certified the universality of certain youth problems, and they both revealed capable directors.

The other two were British-made documentaries about famous performers. *Keeping Love Alive* by Stephen Garrett and David Robinson (film critic of the London *Times*) is about Elisabeth Welch, the American black singer, now 79, who has spent most of her career performing in London and Paris clubs and shows. Robinson, who introduced the film, said, "I have loved this artist since I was a small child." To grow up and eventually make a glowing film about someone who has meant so much to you for so long—that must be a nicely complete feeling.

Maria, by Tony Palmer, is about Maria Callas. The film's purpose is less to trace her career, though that's made clear enough, than to investigate her personal troubles. Her life was plagued by a loneliness that was more than the conventional superstar plaint. Interviews with friends and colleagues, notably one with Franco Zeffirelli, do much to illuminate her melancholy. The archival footage shows yet again that, though Callas did not have a sheerly ravishing voice, she was an extraordinary singing actress. "The illusion of the first time," that constant aim of actors, is especially hard to create in opera; but to see and hear Callas as Tosca doing "Vissi d'arte" is to understand why opera was invented in the first place. (*Maria* is to be shown on PBS this fall.)

Love, Mother, an engaging Hungarian

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Boyfriends and Girlfriends. Eric Rohmer's screenplay doesn't come to much, but he and his actors spin this conversation piece exquisitely. (Reviewed 8/1/88)

A Handful of Dust. Merely competent though the two leads are, the ambience and the spiritual tragedy of Waugh's great novel are fixed. (6/27/88)

Pascali's Island. Turkish-Greek-British intrigue on an Aegean island, 1908. Soft script, but Ben Kingsley is superb, Charles Dance and Helen Mirren colorful. (8/8&15/88)

A World Apart. Barbara Hershey, Jodhi May, Linda Mvusi—a South African activist, her teenage daughter, their black maid—are excellent in this moving though politically somewhat nebulous screenplay. (7/18&25/88)

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domestic comedy-drama, was introduced by its engaging director, János Rózsa. The next day we talked about his film (Rózsa's English is fluent), and he asked me what I thought it would have cost to make it in America. I guessed, without big stars, between eight and ten million. He said that, with 45 days of shooting, it had cost $200,000 in Hungary. I asked him what the two leading actors had been paid. Four to six thousand dollars each, he said, adding that actors had to do theater and TV as well as film to keep afloat. I guessed that an actor's income for a year might be 25 or 26 thousand. "Tops," he said, noting that if a husband and wife each had that income, they could live the way the couple lived in his film.

A documentary called *History of the Jews in Estonia* was interesting on three scores: the fabric of Jewish life there, before and after the Second War; the (unsuspected) beauties of Tallinn and other Estonian cities; and the provenance of the film. Bengt and Irmgard von zur Mühlen are a West German couple in their 50s, of *echt* aristocratic background, who specialize in films about the Holocaust. He produces, she directs. In 1961 they founded Chronos Films in West Berlin to distribute their films, of which there are now 15, and others on related subjects. They left the Festival for Kaliningrad—formerly Königsberg in eastern Prussia—to start three more films.

Israeli subjects. First, a British-made documentary, *Shattered Dreams*. I had seen it at the Film Forum in New York and was pleasantly surprised to find it billed here. Directed by Victor Schonfeld between 1982 and 1986, it rigorously examines Israel's troubles and turbulences during those years, including of course Jewish-Arab disputes. The Festival program is worth quoting:

> *Shattered Dreams* was intended primarily for those unacquainted with the fine shades of Israeli society. Bearing this in mind, it is still a must for every Israeli, if only because this is how we appeared in the eyes of the liberal left overseas, at least until the uprising in the territories.

Then there were Israeli films as such. I saw five, which brings my total experience to about 20 of the 350 features that have been made in Israel. That's hardly a basis for generalization, but these five, like the others I've seen, were more rewarding for their subjects than for their execution—just the reverse of many films elsewhere.

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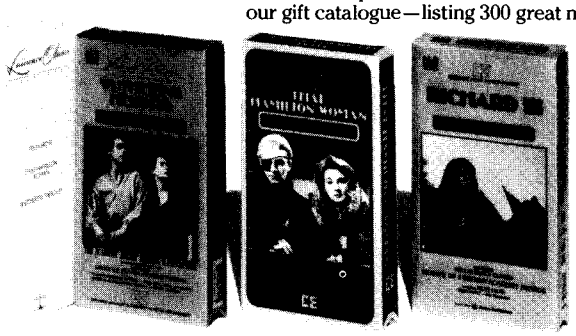

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all had Hebrew subtitles, which is true of other Israeli films shown in Israel. (Imagine American films with English subtitles.) Yaakov Malkin, head of the film department at Tel Aviv University, told me that subtitles are used because, until quite recently, the sound tracks of Israeli films were poor and audiences needed to read the dialogue. Now people are used to them. Besides, recent immigrants, learning Hebrew, appreciate the chance to read as well as hear.

Avanti Popolo, of which Israelis are particularly proud, is an allegory about two Egyptian soldiers trying to get home across the desert after the Six-Day War. (I still don't understand the title—which is from an Italian socialist marching song.) I thought it heavy, contrived, clumsy. *The Owl* is imitation Hollywood, a fast-paced spy-sex-murder yarn that, quite deliberately, makes no attempt at any kind of originality. The other three films were much more interesting.

Late Summer Blues, written by Doron Nesher from a story by Renen Schorr, who directed, is a frank account of high school students during their last break before induction into the army. (Some of them are killed later on.) The film was made in 1987 but is set in 1970 during the so-called War of Attrition on the Suez Canal. The high school kids fool around and moon around just like the high school kids we know, except that these kids know that the army lies ahead of them and that their country is either in or at the close risk of war—always. (*Late Summer Blues* opens in New York this month.)

Due to That War . . ., written and directed by Orna Ben-Dor Niv, is a documentary about two rock singers, Yehuda Poliker and Yaacov Gilad. The father of one and the mother of the other are concentration camp survivors, articulate ones; the film dramatizes the way the two sons have dealt with the experience of their elders by transforming it into rock numbers. The songs (apparently) don't diminish what happened; but the music makes the experience the sons' possession as well as the parents', so that they can grieve instead of merely being flattened by it.

Aviha's Summer, whose world premiere closed the Festival, has candor of its own. The screenplay derives from an autobiographical novel by Gila Almagor, who plays one of the two leading roles—a woman who was a partisan fighter in Europe during the Second War and now, around 1950, lives in an Israeli town. Almagor herself was this woman's ten-year-old daughter, played here by the gifted Kaipu Cohen. The latter is no relation to the director, Eli Cohen, who handles both his actors skillfully.

It's peripheral to the film as such but nonetheless fascinating that the mother, who meant so much in strength and mystery to her child, is now played by that child. Almagor is splendid as the wracked woman, mentally unhinged by her experiences, violently protective of her child, irrationally romantic about the "husband" she has lost but believes will turn up. The film's candor is in the cruelty, perceived by the child but not then understood, of the townsfolk to the unbalanced woman, mocking her Hebrew (a new language to her) and even her condition. Thus is this partisan who fought for freedom received by her fellow Jews in the promised land.

All five of these Israeli films deal, directly or indirectly, with war. In Festival programming terms, this is probably a coincidence. In historical terms, not so.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Running on Empty

Miracolo d'Amore (New York Public Theater) is the fourth in a series of theater-music pieces that Martha Clarke has been devising in collaboration with the composer Richard Peaslee, and the design artists Robert Israel (sets and costumes) and Paul Gallo (lights). Having assembled one of the most brilliant creative teams in America, including a fine dance company, she has had a rare opportunity for continuous, organic artistic development. Yet rather than growing in strength, Clarke's work, since her masterly and astonishing *Garden of Earthly Delights*, has been getting progressively more diffuse.

Miracolo d'Amore
by Martha Clarke
(New York Public Theater)

Much Ado About Nothing
by William Shakespeare
(New York Shakespeare Festival)

Miracolo d'Amore is the least satisfying of the series. Handsome and powerful though it was, *Vienna: Lusthaus* suffered, in my opinion, from Clarke's failure to assimilate the verbal rhythms of Charles L. Mee Jr.'s text; *The Hunger Artist*, for all its eerie atmosphere and surrealist imagery, lacked a convincing stage equivalent for Kafka's febrile imaginings; and *Miracolo d'Amore*, despite some gorgeous music and striking visual properties, is a curiously empty and sometimes pretentious exercise in choreographic calisthenics. At the same time that her technical vocabulary is growing, Clarke's creative energies seem to be flagging a bit. She tends to repeat images from her other work, sometimes accompanied by a morbid cuteness, the will doing the work of the imagination.

In a cogent article in the *New York Times*, Michael Kimmelman has hinted at a reason for these limitations—her relationship to her source material. Martha Clarke has always been indebted to other artists—Hieronymus Bosch in *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Klimt and Schiele in *Vienna: Lusthaus*, Kafka in *The Hunger Artist*. Here, she is looking for theatrical inspiration in the canvases of Tiepolo and Grandville, but without finding anything particularly original or unifying she can call her own. It is a style that Kimmelman astutely identifies as "Mannerism"—"its inspiration is art, not experience." The result is 50 minutes of longueurs. It's like looking at a painting all right—looking at it dry.

Clarke has the capacity to create a very beautiful painting, of course, which Paul Gallo has textured with shafts of gorgeously sculpted light. Robert Israel has contributed a precariously balanced set of skewed flats and slanted windows and Doric doorways, while dressing the men in white ruffed harlequin suits and conical hats to resemble Tiepolo's hump-backed Punchinellos. As for the women, they appear in various states of nudity. One lissome girl pulls a seashell out of another's pubic area and listens to its sounds. A nymph opens her bodice and, presented with a flower, presses it to her bosom. A naked lady sits in a window with a skeleton and combs her hair with its bony fingers.

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One man costumed like Jesus in a white loincloth is fed pasta by a child holding a basket (better treatment, I suppose, than vinegar sponges). Rising from his cross, he distorts his stomach, hobbles across the stage, puts his crippled arms behind him like a vulture's wings, and crows. A nude man wearing a large fish head appears in a gathering fog and rolls in it. It is not long before these Punchinellos turn mean, like the post-lapsarian brutes in *Garden of Earthly Delights*. Two coneheads aim flintlocks at innocent birds, then at each other. One man falls to the ground with a hand over his eyes, and is mauled and kicked; his throat is cut with a thumb. A nymph is attacked by a short man, resists him, and is throttled. In short, familiar scenes of men brutalizing women and each other. Rape and murder. The miracles of love.

But these juxtapositions of violence and beauty, meant to surprise, inspire instead a sense of déjà vu. *Miracolo d'Amore* is accompanied by lovely sounds—notably Peaslee's Monteverdi-like music, snatches of Petrarch, and some verbal interpolations in Italian. Yet for all its visual and aural appeal, the piece is dull. Its form virtually obliterates its content, its images seems random and arbitrary. I am reminded of what Julian Beck of the Living Theater once said about a piece of his own: "All very beautiful, but what does it mean?"

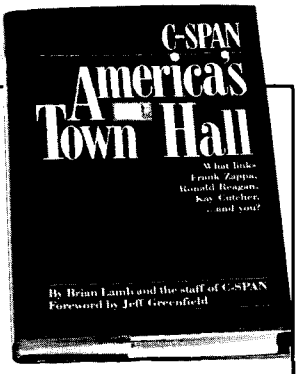
It is a fact of our culture that artists are always expected to follow a success with a new triumph, a pressure not always compatible with the unpredictable pace and leisurely process of creative gestation. Like Tennessee Williams, who felt the need to bring forth a play every year, ready or not, Clarke has been producing annual events with steadily diminishing results. It is said that *Miracolo d'Amore* took months to rehearse. If only it had taken months to prepare. My entirely unsolicited and no doubt unwanted advice to this hugely gifted artist is to abstain from public presentation until her artistic resources are replenished, until the experience tank refills, until personal rather than media pressures compel her to create.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING at the New York Shakespeare Festival is the fourth in Joseph Papp's Shakespeare Marathon, and it is running on full. Papp's former artistic director, Gerald Freedman—now head of the Great Lakes Theater Festival in Cleveland—has given this romantic comedy a warm, intelligent reading with the aid of a strong company. Every line, every character, every action is cleanly interpreted; from the initial moment (a cannon blast, followed by a mock duel between Benedick and Claudio), we know we are in the hands of a decisive, thoughtful director.

Freedman bases his interpretation on the ambiguous title—the noun "nothing" was once an Elizabethan homonym for the gerund "noting" (or watching). This is a play about eavesdropping—and the "ado" that results from misconstruing prearranged deceptions. Both Benedick and Beatrice are encouraged to express their dormant love when they overhear reports about being loved by the other; Hero is libeled after Don Pedro and Claudio mistake her for Margaret, whom Borachio is visiting; Don John's schemes are exposed when the Watch eavesdrops on the drunken Borachio bragging about his villainy. Just as overhearing is the operative action of the play, to "note" is the operative verb.

ANY WORK with eavesdropping at the center needs a lot of windows, doors, and hedges, and these have been generously supplied by John Ezell's Sicilian village setting. Yet the physical element is the major disappointment of the evening. Ezell, Freedman's associate director at Great Lakes, has collaborated in updating the play to Messina during the Napoleonic wars, but these stunted stucco buildings, with their red slate roofs and pots of geraniums, have a storybook quaintness more appropriate for housing the Toon characters in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* than the swashbuckling grenadiers of *Much Ado*. I was not much taken either with John Morris's rather bland polkas and oompah band music, or the pastel Empire gowns of the women, designed by the usually more dependable Theoni V. Aldredge. These elements tend to ground the production in material banality, making it seem more conventional than it actually is, just as the Park's reverberant amplification system makes it sound more hollow.

Still, a play like *Much Ado* rests on the back of actors. They mostly carry it well; Kevin Kline runs with it. Benedick makes no demand on his somewhat guarded interior resources, only on his considerable charm, and in a well-appointed uniform and corsair mustache, he cuts an irresistible figure.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GERALD BUTT

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Kline is in his maturity now, with a hint of gray in his hair. He brings weight to his role, but not at the cost of athleticism, toppling over a hedge and through a window, almost falling from the tree where he has been eavesdropping on Don Pedro and Claudio while drinking a full bottle of wine. In a riot of blond curls, Blythe Danner's Beatrice has equal maturity, despite a voice that seems to be in shreds. She plays the part as if Beatrice were the kissing cousin of Katherine the shrew. Danner pricks Benedick with her wit and Hero with a sewing pin, throws lemons at her tormentors, and swings merrily on a trellis door. When she and Benedick finally decide to bury repartee and confess their tender feelings (Benedick has trouble kneeling, and stammers over the word "marriage"), their passionate kiss, repeated in the curtain call, is the rousing climax of a perfectly matched love.

Jerry Stiller's Dogberry shambles through the scenery in oversized green pants accompanied by the blind, halt, and enfeebled members of his Watch. He tosses off his celebrated malapropisms with naturalistic, New York inflections, all the while giving an invaluable lesson in relaxed comic acting. David Pierce is dour, pale, and fragile as the would-be villain Don John (he faints in outrage at another's reported happiness). Brian Murray plays Don Pedro with the sangfroid of a young Herbert Marshall; Phoebe Cates displays a ripening histrionic confidence as Hero; Don Reilly is an attractive Claudio; and most of the smaller roles are effectively filled.

Twenty-eight years ago, in the same park setting, Gerald Freedman directed the best *Taming of the Shrew* I've yet seen, creating a joyous, exuberant American farce style that drew on the Marx Brothers, Mack Sennett, and animated cartoons. This *Much Ado About Nothing* is not quite up to that standard, but Kline and Danner are able to display considerably more passion, if less elegance, than the frigid Derek Jacoby-Sinead Cusack performance sponsored by the Royal Shakespeare Company some seasons back. Admittedly, Freedman's new production is not very original or daring—Zefferilli's *Much Ado* at the Old Vic in 1965 took a lot more risks with its updated Italian setting. But it is consistently larky, and it captures all the epigrammatic wit, broad comedy, and melodramatic intrigue to be (over)heard in the play.

MARK STEVENS ON ART

Retouching Rembrandt

Rembrandt has served for centuries as a symbolic conscience and truth-teller, an artist who, by staring into the fogs of the self, helped clarify the moral and spiritual condition of Western culture after the Renaissance. Although different periods have changed the details of emphasis—Rembrandt is here more romantic, there more existential—his special authority, rooted in the moral dignity of the examined life, has remained strong. Above all in the self-portraits, where each painting adds to our knowledge by subtracting from our certainty.

Rembrandt is now suffering the predictable consequences of this authority. Two recent books diminish his life; a third reduces the moral force of his vision. Meanwhile, a committee of Dutch scholars is struggling with Sisyphean perseverance to distinguish the real Rembrandt from the mountain of misattribution and fakery. In some ways, this questioning is welcome. We have surely heard enough about the great humanist whose yellow-brown paintings soothe the soul the way a wrinkled leather armchair rests the bones. But there's also something enervating now at work, a pinch in the intelligence and a cramp in the heart. Rembrandt was a great painter and an even greater printmaker; but you will not find here much serious joy in his achievement or gain much feeling for his visual intelligence or penetrate, except narrowly, his many mysteries. As for his special authority, this arouses doubt, derision, and spectacle-cleaning.

Rembrandt's Portrait: A Biography
by Charles L. Mee Jr.
(Simon and Schuster, 336 pp., $19.95)

Rembrandt: His Life, His Paintings
by Gary Schwartz
(Viking, 380 pp., $50)

Rembrandt's Enterprise: The Studio and the Market
by Svetlana Alpers
(University of Chicago Press, 160 pp., $29.95)

The Rembrandt Research Project plays a strange part in the struggle over the artist, for it means to put questions to rest. It resembles certain other official efforts to legislate value—a committee of bankers gathered to protect money from inflation by adopting the gold standard, a colloquy of churchmen defining the dogma in order to preserve a religion's purity. Composed of five scholars, the committee has spent 20 years—20 years! and there's still much more to do—studying in infinitesimal detail the paintings attributed to the master. Its members make use of every possible technique and then give the painting a yes, no, or maybe. They have been laudably strict, downgrading such old favorites as the Frick's *The Polish Rider* and Berlin's *Man with the Golden Helmet.*

There is a touch of mania in this, of course, for the task is almost impossible. The art of Rembrandt is naturally elusive; and he maintained a large workshop in which students and assistants painted in his manner. He was prepared, like many artists of his time, to sell studio work under his own name, and other artists found it profitable to copy his style. To anyone with an eye it has long been clear that many pictures are wrongly attributed. In obvious cases the committee will merely confirm what people suspected. In more difficult cases, the attribution will remain in doubt, despite the best efforts of the committee, scholars being scholars and Rembrandt being Rembrandt.

Why go to such trouble? Why get so official? The answer is simple: it seems intolerable that trickery should pass in the name of a man who represents authenticity and individual integrity. Unfortunately, efforts to establish purity usually backfire; the Rembrandt Project also resembles a father who, determined to proclaim the virginity of a daughter, invites her seduction. The committee has helped give point to other questions about Rembrandt's authenticity: if paintings that once looked like the inimitable work of genius are something else, then the painter's reputation in other areas may also be suspect.

Rembrandt's life is one such area. It has become a truism that, as other sources of moral authority have declined (particularly the Church), the figure of the artist has taken on increased stature. To some, Rembrandt provides an essential model for the serious modern life. He is the great solitary who does not flinch when he looks in the mirror. He refuses to sweeten his art with the glossy classicism preferred by the fancy people of the peri-

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od. He is generous, discerning the value in the poor and the rough. He is an eccentric who will not fit in. Not an easy job, being a paragon, especially since Rembrandt himself did not apply for it.

Two recent biographies reduce the stature of Rembrandt's life, one through anger, the other through affection. While taking revisionist scholarship into account and keeping Rembrandt's faults in mind, Charles L. Mee Jr. has nonetheless tried to maintain the old heartwarming feeling in *Rembrandt's Portrait*, but in ways that possess little of the old grandeur. He does so by writing colorfully about 17th-century Amsterdam, so that we can take a tourist's pleasure in visiting the haunts of the great man. Because information about Rembrandt is scant, Mee's book is full of appealing but slimly documented musings about the artist's life: Mee suggests, for example, on the basis of a doctor's report about an unnamed artist, that Rembrandt once became convinced that his bones were melting. No garden variety melancholy for a genius.

It makes a cozy read, which is the problem. An artist of Rembrandt's power, complexity, and position in Western culture demands a response deeper than interesting supposition and meandering surmise. It is Rembrandt's greatness that finally interests, and there's not enough of that in this book; or, as so often happens today, we are too much the tourist when approaching genius. At the same time, the book is so full of "perhaps" and "might have" and "it would not be surprising if" that we become overly conscious of the author himself. He begins to seem like a restorer filling in the cracks of a masterpiece—and then getting carried away with his own artistry. Only a very great or a very humble restorer could do justice to a Rembrandt painting. The same is true of the life.

Gary Schwartz published an extensively researched and much noticed monograph on the artist in 1985, *Rembrandt: His Life, His Paintings*. Although he analyzed the iconography of the paintings, charted the power of Rembrandt's patrons, and described the clannish nature of Protestant Amsterdam, the real interest of his book, its revisionist fire, was his personal anger at this artist three centuries dead. "To sum it up bluntly," he wrote (and Schwartz is nothing if not blunt), "Rembrandt had a nasty disposition and an untrustworthy character."

What did Rembrandt do wrong? Born into a prosperous middle-class family in 1606, the young artist became a fashionable portrait and history painter in Amsterdam, where he set up a large studio, married up in the world, and bought a pretentious house beyond his means. Instead of admiring Rembrandt's independence, Schwartz accuses the artist of mistreating friends and patrons, delivering paintings late, and finally failing to take advantage of great opportunities. Instead of finding him sympathetic to the downtrodden, he accuses the painter of greediness; a famous story tells of students painting trompe l'oeil coins on the floor to see if he'd stoop. Instead of going bankrupt because he was distracted by more important things, Schwartz finds him merely irresponsible, spending lavishly on riffraff, old cloth, armor, seashells, busts, curiosities, and hundreds of prints.

REMBRANDT WORKSHOP, *STUDIO INTERIOR WITH TWO SITTERS*

Worst of all, Rembrandt was cruel. Unlike traditional biographers, Schwartz does not gloss over Rembrandt's relationship with his common-law wife, Geertge Dircx, his son's nurse with whom he took up after his wife Saskia died. When he fell for yet another woman, and Geertge sued him for support, Rembrandt apparently put her into an insane asylum. "It would hurt me if the reader thought that I was painting too black a picture of Rembrandt's character by leaving out the evidence of his humanity," Schwartz writes in his afterword. "Believe me, this is not so. If anything, I have spared him of even worse, such as the testimony that he stole some of the savings of his daughter Cornelia . . ."

Schwartz's diligent research will doubtless enrich our understanding of the man; his refusal to bend to the romantic myths, to explain away troubling details, shows courage. And there is something appealing, because so rare, in the sight of a scholar willing to write with passion and disgust. But his sense of human nature is so remarkably simplistic, his feeling for the complex texture of human relations so crude, his confidence in judgments based on limited and circumstantial evidence so inflated, that his black portrait fails to convince.

Does he not know that one can be both greedy and generous, cruel and kind, pitiful and great? That an artist might even steal from his daughter and in other ways remain sympathetic? Or that suffering (Rembrandt's children and wives died before him) makes people behave badly and, if not serving as a justification, must at least deepen the colors of judgment? It seems likely, on the basis of reading these books, that Rembrandt was a selfish and deeply flawed man whom people were often willing to forgive because he was worth the trouble. Nothing else quite explains why students, women, friends, and patrons stuck with him for as long as they did.

Schwartz also has no sense of the disturbing ways in which flaws in a man can be strengths in an artist. For example, Rembrandt's ugly treatment of patrons might have protected him, psychologically, from compromising his art with prettiness. Perhaps it took an oafish boor to draw a defecating dog in the picture of the Good Samaritan. (Over the centuries many people have objected.) But that shocking detail, by rubbing our noses into the world's indifference to good acts, lends power, outrage, and ethical force to the gentle story.

If Schwartz reduces the man, Svetlana Alpers, the art historian, diminishes the

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artist in *Rembrandt's Enterprise*. Alpers is a much subtler writer, and her subject, Rembrandt's practice as an artist, is more important than the failures of the life. She is interested in how Rembrandt's milieu—or, to use the fashionable parlance, his context—informed his vision. She suggests the ways in which Rembrandt's relation to his materials, his studio procedure, and the marketplace helped shape his art. She does this very well. But there is a challenge to Rembrandt's traditional authority that should not be overlooked.

Alpers's challenge begins with her title. We are not asked to admire Rembrandt's painting or insight; we are asked to notice his "enterprise." This is a surprisingly modest and mundane word to apply to Rembrandt. A nice enough value in its way, "enterprise" suggests cleverness and diligence, particularly in business or professional matters, but not spiritual or moral power. Before we even open the book, in other words, Alpers has warned us that she intends to avoid the romantic model. This tone, debunking with faint praise, is characteristic. A good example is Alpers's description of Rembrandt as an "entrepreneur of the self." It is a smart phrase: dry, cool, downbeat. But an entrepreneur of the self, whatever his other merits, can hardly excite our deepest sympathies.

Alpers goes so far as to isolate Rembrandt's response to the market as

> where his peculiarity and innovation lay. It was the commodity—the *Rembrandt*—that Rembrandt made that was new. And it is he, not Rubens, who invented the work of art most characteristic of our culture—a commodity distinguished among others by not being factory produced, but produced in limited numbers and creating its market, whose special claim to the aura of individuality and to high market value bind it to basic aspects of an entrepreneurial (capitalist) enterprise.

We cannot help thinking that the artist traded in selves, a merchant like other merchants in Protestant Amsterdam. As a result, the artist's introspection, long considered one of the glories of Western culture, loses its singular mystery. Rembrandt's very individuality, heretofore understood as so tangibly true, becomes suspect. Alpers terms it the "aura of individuality." Instead of expressing an irreducible value, in other words, Rembrandt is selling yet another fiction. Here Alpers and the Rembrandt Research Project, while having different aims, work in tandem. If other artists can pass as Rembrandt, then perhaps his individuality was just a suit of hand-me-down clothes.

Again and again, what was once felt to be substantial melts into something smaller. Vivid gestures are the poses of models; the tang of real life is cooked up in the studio. Rembrandt "got at 'real life,'" she says, "through attending to the acting of it in the studio." As for Rembrandt's taste for high drama, Alpers does not go out of her way to suggest that it enlivens important issues. She seems more interested in Rembrandt's relation to the theater of the time, which he transposed to his studio.

ALPERS REPEATEDLY qualifies and refines her analysis. She often alludes to other ways of approaching Rembrandt. I am reluctant, therefore, to say that she simplifies. For example, she does not argue the play of moral and spiritual forces is less important than Rembrandt's milieu or "enterprise." She simply doesn't write much about all that. She doesn't attack outright the more romantic views of Rembrandt; she would, rather, "put it differently." Her writing makes perfectly clear that she is not a crude or reductive Marxist insensitive to art's aesthetic value, and she is certainly correct to argue that art is, among other things, a revealing cultural artifact; besides, others have written extensively about Rembrandt's moral and formal strengths.

Yet the book leaves behind the very strong impression that Rembrandt is a painter of small interest to anyone but a scholar. This takes some doing, and it's worth speculating why this scholar bothered. What is Alpers's enterprise?

She may not know it—just as Rembrandt may not have known that he was an entrepreneur of the self—but there is a sense in which she is interested in usurping some of Rembrandt's authority. Not for herself, not for the left (as many neoconservatives believe), but for her academic "class." It is the figure of the scholar, one feels, that here asserts cultural primacy. This is done first by eroding our faith in Rembrandt's special authority; then, by confining him to his period and place, he is made a man only of his time, not for all time. As a result, our sense of connection to the artist weakens. We become unsure that old art can be something more than history, serving a vital purpose in contemporary culture. Rembrandt's meanings seem, in Alpers's hands, to require the help of historians.

Who is the master, if history is the value? The authority once reserved for the artist passes to the scholar. We are encouraged to make this grant by certain other traits of academic writing. For one thing, it is the scholar who, in showing himself aware of the constraints of

THE STORY

These things happen if you work as a waitress
in an all-night diner like the Double-O.
He told everyone his name was Anonymous.

She said he was just a drunk, harmless,
who wanted to put on some kind of show:
these things happen when you work as a waitress.

There's coffee in my saucer, it's a goddam mess,
this knife is dirty, the eggs are too slow.
He had a big mouth, that Mister Anonymous.

He called her bitch, and called her sweetness.
Make me, he said when she told him to go.
What do you expect if you're an all-night waitress?

She called the police, and gave the address.
He held the knife under her chin, like so,
and said, *Remember, my name is Anonymous.*

So I get to stay late to clean up the mess
and tell you all this. Now can I go?
These things happen when you work as a waitress.
He told me, I swear, his name was Anonymous.

ELIZABETH TORNES

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history, now seems to stand above time. For another, we instinctively admire whoever's got the goods on someone, especially the scoop on the great. Whether Freudian, Marxist, deconstructivist, or new historicist, academic writers often assume the authority of the secret-holder. In stressing a rather disreputable secret of sex or social power beneath a great work of art, they enhance themselves by exposing their subject.

Scholars should not bow and scrape before genius in the 19th-century way. They should certainly continue to compile the facts, prune the excesses of sentiment, expose the secrets, and reveal the social character of art. But they should also convey, forcefully, that there are larger qualities in art. They should stress that a painter works out of many contradictory motives and that his art, if it's any good, has many meanings, great and small. A scholar like Alpers is not wrong; she is simply not right enough. Rembrandt built his power on the riches of paradox. He composed himself of doubts and subversions: the theatrical Rembrandt questions the real; the real questions the theatrical. Rembrandt was indeed an entrepreneur of the self—but equally a lover, a critic, and a master of the self.

THE SCOURGE OF LIBERALISM

Political Romanticism
by Carl Schmitt
translated by Guy Oakes

(MIT Press, 177 pp., $20)

Political Theology:
Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty
by Carl Schmitt
translated by George Schwab

(MIT Press, 70 pp., $15)

The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy
by Carl Schmitt
translated by Ellen Kennedy

(MIT Press, 132 pp., $17.50)

When Carl Schmitt joined the Nazi party in May 1933, his reputation for theoretical brilliance was already secure. Today leftists continue to praise his debunking of parliamentary government, while conservatives still commend his belief that the humanistic universalism of the Enlightenment was bound to produce "a sea of blood." Even fierce critics treat him deferentially, as an intellect to be reckoned with. Recently, in America as well as Europe, his star seems to be on the rise. The leftish quarterly *Telos*, for instance, devoted an entire issue to his work. According to one contributor, "The rehabilitation of Schmitt has begun." And the editors' introduction tantalizingly concludes: "In the present situation of political stalemate, the left can only benefit by learning from Carl Schmitt." *From*, not about.

Schmitt was born in the Sauerland in 1888 and raised as a Catholic. He eventually went on to study law and rose to a certain academic prominence in the 1920s, publishing an impressive series of scholarly and polemical works. The main obstacle confronting his rehabilitators is his unsavory career between 1933 and 1936. Even before he joined the NSDAP, Schmitt (who abhorred federalism) co-authored some of Hitler's early legislation "synchronizing" the states. After enrolling in the party and assuming the post of Prussian state councilor, he composed several strident pamphlets, damning the Weimar constitution as a foreign plot and celebrating the Third Reich as an intoxicating response to the humiliation of Versailles. In a famous article defending the

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Röhm purge, he noted that liberalism had crippled the imperial regime, overprotecting the private sphere and preventing officials from crushing mutineers. German victimization, it turns out, quickly engenders its opposite: "All moral indignation about the scandal of such a collapse has concentrated itself in Adolf Hitler."

SCHMITT'S notoriety eventually provoked the jealousy of party hacks, particularly in the SS. Accused of being insincerely anti-Semitic, he redeemed himself by hosting a conference on "German jurisprudence at war with the Jewish spirit." Published on October 15, 1936, in the official *Deutsche Juristen-Zeitung*, Schmitt's closing speech was a masterful performance, *if* he was actually engaged, as his apologists contend, in a hypocritical attempt to please authorities. Holding Jews responsible for a moral crisis in the West, he described them as "the deadly enemy of every genuine productivity of every other people." To help sustain "the undamaged purity of the German people," law faculties must create "a German jurisprudence no longer infected by Jews." To avoid the "atrocious suggestion" that German students should use Jewish ideas, books by Jews must be yanked from the shelves and confined to a special section labeled "Judaica." Airy anti-Semitic discussions, by which "no individual Jew feels himself personally touched," are ineffective. Only a detailed register of Jewish scholars will permit a "cleansing" of German jurisprudence. Footnotes should read, for example: Kelsen, Hans, Jew. "The very mention of the word 'Jewish' will be a wholesome exorcism."

Still under attack from within the party, Schmitt retained his chair at the University of Berlin only by the good graces of Hermann Göring. After 1936 he ceased writing about domestic issues and focused instead on international law, justifying the Greater Reich, for example, by spinning an analogy with the Monroe Doctrine. Feeling unappreciated, however, he soured somewhat (but not completely) on the Nazi regime. He was arrested at the end of the war and modestly told his Nuremberg interrogator: "I am an intellectual adventurer." To put things into perspective, he added: "Christianity, too, resulted in the murder of millions of people." Released without being charged, he lived a relatively uneventful life in West Germany for the next 40 years, publishing in moderation, making a few attempts at self-exculpation, and apparently never relinquishing the belief that he was one of the misunderstood giants of the age. He died in 1985 at the age of 96.

CHARACTERISTIC of Schmitt's artfully crafted prose is a shrewd oscillation between the cold and the feverish, the academic and the prophetic, the analytical and the mythical. This spell-binding back-and-forth is the secret of his success. His books plait together sober theoretical observations with near ecstatic political intimations. (Suggesting that the direction of world history is at stake, he can make discussions of constitutional technicalities glow incandescently.) This striking pattern appears in his famous argument, advanced in *The Concept of the Political* of 1928, that the essence of politics lies in the distinction between friends and enemies. War is neither the main purpose nor the content of politics. But what makes politics special, what lends it its "specific political tension," is the shadow of violent personal extinction cast over all genuinely political action. "The political" lofts citizens above "the economic" by confronting them with a mortal enemy, with the threat of violent death at the hands of a hostile group. (Schmitt did not yet openly associate the economic sphere with Jews, but he already portrayed it as a sordid arena where weaklings scramble to gratify material needs.)

Schmitt's friend/enemy distinction can be viewed as a tool for historical analysis. It also contains, implicitly, a cutting polemic against liberals and Marxists. Liberals reduce human struggle to conflicts of interest, that is, to antagonism resolvable by compromise. But human strife, Schmitt insists, often takes less tractable forms. Some enmities are so intense that splitting the difference is inconceivable. In such situations, all parties think confrontationally. Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka: it isn't difficult to produce examples. (About the social causes for the escalation of manageable conflict into uncompromising enmity, Schmitt has nothing at all to say.)

Marx committed a similar fallacy, reducing all human conflict to the struggle between economic classes, even though everyone can see that conflicts sometimes result from non-economic cleavages—ethnic, religious, linguistic, national, and so on. Similarly, Marx conceived human struggle in the light of a philosophy of history that, in turn, ensured the ultimate victory of those who are morally superior. Schmitt exploded this fairy tale with the plausible assertion that conflicts shall persist so long as humanity endures. In most cases, moreover, not the better, but the stronger, will win.

Schmitt combines this plausible criticism of liberal and Marxist naïveté with a quite different, and much less credible, kind of argument. He asserts, in all seriousness, that the distinction between friend and enemy is the source of the meaning of life. Now, we might agree that having an enemy provides a reason for getting up in the morning; the innate yearning for spats and set-tos is familiar to every student of the human comedy. But Schmitt has little sense of the ridiculous. For him, history is tragedy—or perhaps melodrama. Without the possibility of confronting a mortal enemy, according to Schmitt, life cannot be serious, is devoid of sense. The existential choice between them and us gives "the political" its radiance, forges manly men, and permits the politically engaged to soar above the frivolity of everyday life.

OBVIOUSLY Schmitt admires the audacity of the Marxists, especially their willingness, reinforced by a Hegelian philosophy of history, to establish counter-majoritarian dictatorships. Unlike liberals, moreover, Marxists understand that human beings need a gripping myth to give weight and significance to life. Myths, as Sorel explained, awaken emotions, create solidarities, tighten muscles, and give people the courage to fight. Marxists themselves rely on the myth of a final battle between the forces of good and evil in which the destiny of mankind will be decided. Unfortunately, in Schmitt's view, they also shift the battle line between friends and enemies from the international to the domestic scene. (In healthy societies, according to Schmitt, all politics is international politics.) Under the influence of communist propaganda, classes ask their members to kill and die in lethal combat against a hateful enemy. By breaking the state's monopoly on the right to designate mortal adversaries, leftist revolutionaries have driven Europe backward into medieval particularism or religious civil war.

This analysis is interesting. But the conclusion that Schmitt is a modern disciple of Hobbes (drawn, for example, by Schmitt's American biographer, Joseph Bendersky) remains a half-truth. During the 1920s, admittedly, Germany suffered from *too much* polyarchy: from paramili-

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tarism, group hatreds, and ideological polarization, not to mention terrifying economic volatility. In response, his defenders say, Schmitt revived a rationale for autocratic government popularized in 16th- and 17th-century Europe: the idea that state power is beneficial because it can impose internal peace. This gloss on events may seem plausible, at first. It does indeed sound like Hobbes. But what does Schmitt actually say about tranquillity and peace?

He is thoroughly ambivalent. On the one hand, he praises dictatorship as a means for establishing civil peace. On the other hand, he states with equal clarity that disorder is more interesting than order. Peace is intrinsically boring. It actually invites people to live superficially. Schmitt's virulent anti-individualism already separates him sharply from Hobbes. But the essence of his position is nowhere more poetically expressed than in the mid-'20s, at the close of the book on parliamentarism: "The value of life stems not from reasoning; it emerges in a state of war where men inspirited by myths do battle." That is Mussolini, not Hobbes. What he finally expected from "the political" was less order than *meaning* and a sense of the seriousness of human existence.

FRIENDLY commentators on Schmitt eagerly discuss the period between 1930 and 1932. At that time, Schmitt was urging the Reichspräsident to assume the role of benevolent dictator: Hindenburg and his chancellor should use their extraordinary powers to protect the constitution from extremists on both the left and the right. We shouldn't forget, however, that Nazis and communists had sharply different attitudes toward the nationalism by which Schmitt was so manifestly bewitched. Thus, the notion that he was equally hostile to the right and the left isn't altogether credible. Prior to the seizure of power, he considered the Nazis "immature"—able to make Germany ungovernable, but unable to govern it themselves. He disliked them mainly because he feared they would create disorder that communists, in turn, might exploit. He also opposed attempts to revise the Weimar constitution for this reason, not because he was loyal to it or thought it good (all his constitutional writings are devoted to displaying its fundamental incoherence), but because he feared that upending basic institutions in a crisis could create opportunities for a communist coup.

NEXT TO *The Concept of the Political* and the *Verfassungslehre*, the three volumes translated here may well be Schmitt's most influential works. They amply display both the strengths and weaknesses of his thought. *Political Romanticism*, first published in 1919 and 1921, advances the thesis that liberalism and romanticism are far less hostile than many romantics and liberals have conspired to pretend. The romantic sentimentalization of private life would have been unthinkable without the liberal desentimentalization of public life. This is a provocative historical claim, worthy of study. A more bizarre aspect of the book, however, is expressed in a deafening silence. Schmitt reduces the content of romantic thought to a narcissistic search for opportunities to express lyrical feelings. This reading of romanticism is historically and philologically absurd. But it allows Schmitt to obscure utterly the romantic critique of both the *Rechtsstaat* and commercial society—a critique suspiciously like his own. In other words, Schmitt engages in interpretive acrobatics to distract attention from the romantic and aestheticizing dimension of his own thought. (It is for the same reason, presumably, that he slights romantic nationalism.) Even today, this clever feint permits his apologists to deny his obvious affinities with political romanticism.

The gravamen of his case against the romantics—grimly amusing in light of his own subsequent career—is that Adam Müller, the early 19th-century German romantic who criticized liberal economic theory in the name of an "organic" conception of society and the state, was a political chameleon, expressing sympathy for revolution or restoration whenever it proved convenient. This tale of spineless adaptation is meant to convince readers that romantics were hopelessly sissyish and irresolute. At some level, he suggests, romantics were just like women! (Schmitt often invokes the difference between male and female to describe the difference between authority and anarchy.) Even when pruned of metaphysical sexism, however, Schmitt's argument remains faulty: no-nonsense characters such as Talleyrand also displayed protean traits during periods of rapid political change. And the French ultras were even less self-possessed than the German romantics: most were impractical dreamers, unable to comprehend the realities of the

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day, embroiled in harebrained conspiracies before 1830 and catapulted out of politics thereafter.

The historical inaccuracies are no more obvious here than in Schmitt's other works. Unique about *Political Romanticism* is its shrill censoriousness. This is the railing of the healthy against the sick; and the sick should be liquidated, not cured. Schmitt praises the contempt felt by "the solid man" for puny sentimentalists. His disgust for daydreaming, dilatoriness, and lyrical moods seems boundless. But what incited these emotional effusions against emotional effusions?

HAVING ATTENDED Max Weber's seminar in Munich around this time, Schmitt naturally invoked the hardy male virtues of "responsibility" and *Sachlichkeit* when condemning the debility of romantics. Still, the political situation to which he was reacting becomes clear only when he states that romantics lacked the inner strength to hate foreign domination. Romantics were to be associated with the humiliation of the Peace Settlement and the failure of Germany's middle class to respond to the postwar chaos with a mailed fist. (*The Concept of the Political*, incidentally, contains the poignant claim that reparations payments are worse than tribute. The North American Indians have already been exterminated. Soon the Germans may meet the same fate for failing to pay their debts!)

Echoing Nietzsche, Schmitt portrays liberalism as the ideology of the weak. Infected by an anti-confrontationist and concessive liberalism, Germany's middle classes have forgotten how to retaliate when attacked. They are skeptical, relativistic, and timorously apolitical—unable, in short, to distinguish friends from enemies. They have weakened the state in order to protect private property, and thereby crippled the one force capable of repulsing the socialist threat. Deprived of a guiding myth and in full "flight from politics," the German bourgeoisie lacks the courage to spill blood and is thus no match for resolute communists. (Leo Strauss, among others, helped familiarize American readers with this diagnosis of sickly liberalism.)

The craven desire to submerge the political into the economic reveals, according to Schmitt, the suicidal nature of middle-class liberalism. No country can maintain its unity as a mere network of consumers and producers—but this is exactly what the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty were designed to make Germany become. Moral codes are sticks with which one group beats another. In this case, the allies used liberalism to confuse and humiliate Germany while cynically pursuing their own imperialistic designs.

IN *Political Theology* (1922) Schmitt accuses liberals, again plausibly, of underestimating the need for political leadership. They place too much confidence in laws and rules, in the free market, and in the triumph of truth in open discussion. They also fail to appreciate that, in critical moments, decisions may have to be made before a rational consensus can emerge. This polemic against liberalism, as usual, is balanced neatly by a polemic against Marxism.

Schmitt does not try to replace economic determinism with theological determinism. But he does assert that, in politics, the limits to the possible are set by human imagination, rather than by material resources. What can be imagined, in turn, is a product of religious beliefs. The "proof" Schmitt offers of this dependency relation is the historical coexistence of monarchy with monotheism and of anarchy with atheism. Faith in one God makes monarchical authority self-evident. The belief that God is dead leads inevitably to the idea that power is evil. Especially memorable is Schmitt's claim that the 19th-century idea of the "nightwatchman state" would have been unthinkable without a prior theological revolution that replaced an interventionist God by a clockmaker God. In other words, economic liberalism is an irrational residue of Deistic theology.

As usual, Schmitt's two-front attack on liberalism and Marxism has something to be said in its favor. But, also as usual, he quickly swerves onto less reasonable ground, in this case when he asserts that the modern concept of sovereignty is a secularized version of the theological idea of divine authority. In making this argument, he wildly distorts his primary sources. Jean Bodin, the great 16th-century theorist of royal sovereignty, knew that a prince, no matter how absolute, had only 24 hours in a day and needed to rely, as God didn't, on indirect strategies to ensure cooperation. Despite Schmitt's assertions to the contrary, Bodin stated explicitly that the sovereign should rule by, and through, general laws. The political decision to declare an emergency situation, he thought, was a reaction to a crisis, a passive response that had little in common with God's free production of miracles. The analogy that captures Schmitt's imagination, in other words, is a false analogy.

Schmitt's own theory, in any case, is justly described as "decisionism." He scorns bargaining and the rule of law, while apotheosizing bold political decisions—the choice of an enemy, for example, or the decision to suspend the constitution and rule by means of the Reichswehr. In some ways, a burning fear of moral skepticism lies at the emotional center of his thought. Decisions provide a reassuring alternative to doubt. (Schmitt probably fears moral skepticism even more than does his relentless critic, Jürgen Habermas.) Finally, Schmitt is almost exclusively concerned with the emotional relief provided by authoritative fiats from above. Thus he overemphasizes the masculine or decisive character of political decisions, and completely neglects, in turn, the distinction between intelligent and stupid decisions. Yet sovereigns have been known to destroy themselves by foolish choices.

THE Crisis Of Parliamentary Democracy (1923/1926), too, contains some sharp analysis. What stabilizes a political institution, Schmitt argues, is less the underlying distribution of economic power than a widespread acceptance of the institution's basic rationale. Representative government, for example, is justified not as a system for horse-trading among interest groups, but as a forum for rational deliberation among free-thinking deputies striving to achieve a better understanding of what they collectively want. Robust parliamentary debate will foster public learning; and eventually it will produce enlightened consensus on questions of policy. Unfortunately, according to Schmitt, this beautiful ideology has become totally obsolete. Only a madman could think that discussions in the Reichstag might guarantee a triumph of truth. All important decisions are made outside of parliament, by powerful groups, behind closed doors. Unable to integrate the nation through rational debate, the elected assembly has become nothing more than a display case for organized social pluralism.

As a reconstruction of the ideology of parliamentary government and a diagnosis of the stalemate in German politics, all this has a semi-cogent ring. But our second Schmitt, the intoxicated mythmaker, also puts in an appearance. He had not forgotten, presumably, who won

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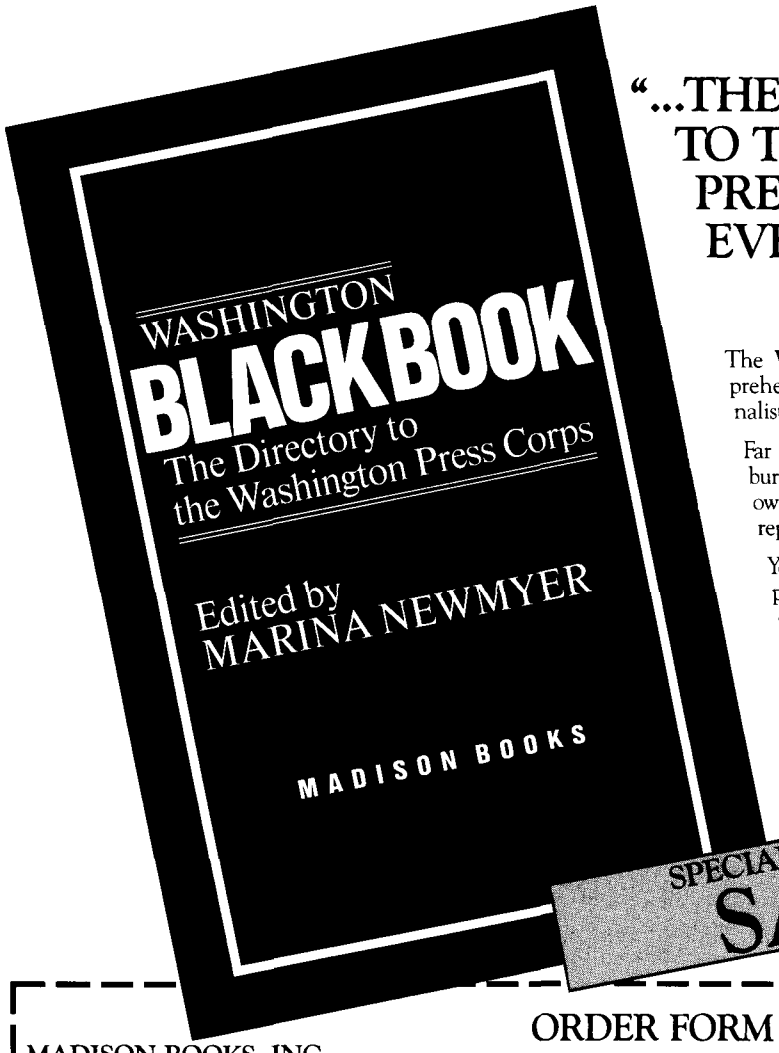

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the First World War, yet he explicitly argues that liberal democracies in general, not just in Germany, are feeble and exhausted. His reconstruction of the rationale for "government by discussion," moreover, is designed to make liberalism seem grotesquely naive. Liberals, he claims, thought that a single newspaper would abolish tyranny and make government perfect.

Caricatured in this way, liberal principles are sure to appear outdated in a realistic age. Schmitt is unsure, incidentally, about whether he wants to portray the rationale for parliamentary government as no longer valid, while having once been so, or as ridiculous in principle. Was the "discussing class" always indecisive, or did its pathetic waffling begin only recently? His confusion on this point is a natural byproduct of his jeering at "government by discussion" even while he asserts that, in the 19th century, it achieved great political success.

SCHMITT DEFINES democracy, quite perversely, as the psychological identification of rulers and ruled. To those frustrated with the endless negotiations and ad hoc compromises of Weimar politics, this appeal to plebiscitary leadership may have sounded attractive. But Schmitt is perfectly clear that democratic rule, as he conceives it, can dispense with elections. The secret ballot, in particular, destroys the emotional unity characteristic of true democracy. Opposition, dissent, distrust of public officials, and protests by outvoted minorities are all liberal, and therefore undemocratic. Fascist Italy and Bolshevik Russia are more democratic than the Weimar Germany, because dictatorships provide an opportunity, which liberal regimes do not, for expressing the seamless unity of the popular will.

"Duce sei tutti noi!" was a famous fascist cry. Schmitt mocked liberal constitutionalism, with its "banal" separation of powers, because it aimed to rule out this kind of "fusion" between rulers and ruled. Freed from liberal shackles, a democratic people will express its will by acclamation, like soldiers smiting their swords against their shields, spontaneously and in deafening unison. Not surprisingly, soccer-stadium democracy requires *das Volk* to exhibit a healthy docility toward its leaders. In his widely praised treatise of 1928 on constitutional law, Schmitt refers to the will of the people as *das "formlos Formende"*—a kind of shapeless blob that still exerts a shaping force. This near-Heideggerian salute to the constituent power of the people was hypocritical, though. Schmitt obviously assumed that a powerful leader would have total freedom in molding public sentiment and opinion.

After 1945, perhaps to conceal a residual sympathy for Nazism, Schmitt affected wholesale hatred for fanatics and nostalgia for a purportedly old and stable European order. The pose is adroit, but it is not convincing. His pre-Nazi celebration of myth-inflamed confrontation is obviously incompatible with any desire to "return" to a low-intensity world where conflict would be devoid of drama and where political enemies, unlike criminals and heretics, could be treated politely. Part of what he sought, already in the 1920s, was an intimation of apocalypse found only in the thunderous clash of extreme worldviews.

Having flaunted his amoralism and kissed the devil, Schmitt is unlikely to encounter a friendly reception among English-speaking political theorists today. But these competent translations of Schmitt's works are welcome, of course. Because of their mixture of sober insight and apocalyptic pretension, his writings remain arresting—and disquieting. At the very least, they provide an eloquent compendium of anti-liberal arguments, arguments that will probably remain popular, even in the United States. Those who continue to diagnose liberalism as an attempt to "submerge the political into the economic," or who still trace all our problems to "bourgeois relativism," might usefully ponder the intentions that originally motivated such claims. Schmitt is certainly not a 20th-century Hobbes, but he remains a disturbingly influential figure. So long as we live under the shadow of Weimar, his theories will continue to attract attention. They should also receive the fair but uncordial criticism they deserve.

STEPHEN HOLMES

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WILD LYRICS

Charlotte Mew and Her Friends by Penelope Fitzgerald

(Addison Wesley, 276 pp., $17.95)

Although the title of this excellent biography suggests a life both cozy and cheerful, its subject, alas, much belies the reader's happy expectations. Undaunted, English novelist Penelope Fitzgerald accosts Charlotte Mew with brisk, no-nonsense storytelling. And while carefully recording the tragedy and the pathos, Fitzgerald avoids spattering the page with her own shed tears—a far kinder demeanor in the long run. Perhaps it's because Mew still does have the rare talent for inspiring friendship, even in a biographer.

Born in 1869, dead in 1928, Charlotte Mew has been reduced to a footnote in the literary canon, remembered, if at all, as the grateful recipient of Thomas Hardy's praise of her as "far and away the best living woman poet, who will be read when others are forgotten." (This volume contains at the end a small but good selection of Mew's poems; the Virago edition of the collected works is also available in paperback.) Hardy actually thought well enough of Mew's work to copy down at least one poem of hers in his own hand—and not because he was enamored of her, either, although, as Fitzgerald puts it, " 'the throbbings of noontide' sometimes overcame him even in the evening of life." By the 'teens, when Hardy, and the group of writers around the Poetry Bookshop, had come to admire her poems, Mew was not a creature likely to inspire passion: in the few pictures and slightly more numerous written portraits she appears as a gnomelike creature with large, hollow eyes, stiffly old-fashioned dress, and a brittle, farouche reserve that was wont, as with many nervous people, to bubble over into a too-great volubility in mixed company or under the influence of a glass of wine.

But she had few enough such public occasions. Born on the Isle of Wight, Mew was raised in London in a shabby-genteel family—her father was an architect who had married his boss's daughter

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and never particularly distinguished himself; the mother, meanwhile, saw her fortune slowly fade. Stated baldly, the facts of Mew's background include: two younger brothers who died in infancy and another who died at the age of five; a beloved elder brother who was institutionalized in his early 20s for "dementia praecox" (schizophrenia, probably) and died there some ten years later; and an even more beloved younger sister who was put away for a similar madness, and to whom Charlotte sent money all her life. The only sane survivor was her younger sister Anne, a ladylike painter of flowers and decorative screens. After their father's death in 1898, "the girls" looked after an increasingly silly and demanding mother, a variety of housemaids, and a parrot who was a hardened criminal. Together they all slumped into poverty—the kind where one must rent out all but two rooms in the family house and where it becomes difficult to scare up grocery money, most of which goes for tea and cigarettes.

CHARLOTTE'S literary career began at an early age. After a conventional schooling at a girls' academy, and a wild crush on her headmistress, she began writing short stories and had the good fortune to become a regular contributor to *the* journal of the day, John Lane's fashionably daring *Yellow Book*. Mew had a pragmatic attitude toward her fiction and would consciously labor to produce work that seemed to fit the style of a particular publication, or that imitated the acknowledged masters of the time—her closest aping of Henry James, for instance, is the 1905 story "Mark Stafford's Wife." It is a bad story, as indeed most of her fiction is bad, replete with the affectations of late Victorianism—coyly "psychological" plots, sentimental attitudes toward prostitution and other degradations of the street, excessive use of mots justes en français, and the labored reproduction of provincial dialects. But despite its indulgence in this last sin, Mew's "The China Bowl," a mother/son/daughter-in-law tragedy set among Cornish fisherfolk, is a pretty powerful tale, the best prose piece she produced. (Although written a few years before *Riders to the Sea*, it has a certain affinity with Synge; and it was probably because of his example that years later Mew redrafted the story as a—sadly, very bad—play.)

One of the oddest features of Mew's fiction is a tendency to manufacture Grand Guignol horror from the facts of ordinary life—say, a girl's decision to become a nun, or a man's love for his hard-hearted wife, or a young woman's indecision about conflicting suitors, or someone's fatal disease. One hears the narrator gasping in the margins, as it were, but Mew lacks the talent to render the banal as creepy as she evidently found it to be. But only in her prose. The poems are masterpieces of the lyric macabre, throat-catching, heart-stopping effulgences of rage and despair and love. Although she much admired the poetry of Emily Brontë, Mew surpasses her ancestor in verse, and more nearly than Brontë herself did, approximates the wild beauty of *Wuthering Heights*.

WHICH IS NOT to say that the work is derivative. Fitzgerald and others have also noted the influences of Hardy and Yeats, and certain affinities with Marianne Moore and even Robert Frost are observable. But Mew's work is really only like itself, busting drunkenly out of whatever scheme it seems the poem has set, into long flailing lies and unsuspected rhymes. "In Nunhead Cemetery," for instance, begins quietly enough, in tidy ABAB quatrains of four or five beats a line, as a mourner at graveside addresses the departed. But in the fifth stanza, as the speaker grows more agitated, suddenly an extra B line is tagged on; then, in the sixth and seventh:

> This is not a real place; perhaps by-and-by
> I shall wake—I am getting drenched
> with all this rain
> To-morrow I will tell you about the eyes of
> the Crystal Palace train
> Looking down on us, and you will laugh
> and I shall see what you see again.
>
> Not here, not now. We said, 'Not yet
> Across our low stone parapet
> Will the quick shadows of the sparrow
> fall.'

And things get even messier after that, as the speaker seems determined either to resurrect the dead by sheer force of will or to join the body in the earth. The lines lurch about, then grow calm again, as the voice retreats into that of childhood: "I am scared, I am staying with you tonight— / Put me to sleep." The poem is a shatteringly direct statement of grief.

Similarly, "The Quiet House" begins with a matter-of-fact account of (fictionalized) family sadness, then dissolves into a synesthetic riot:

> Red is the strangest pain to bear;
> In Spring the leaves of the budding trees;
> In Summer the roses are worse than these,
> More terrible than they are sweet:
> A rose can stab you across the street
> Deeper than any knife:
> And the crimson haunts you everywhere—
> Thin shafts of sunlight, like the ghosts of
> reddened swords have struck our stair
> As if, coming down, you had spilt your life.

This poem, perhaps Mew's strongest, is the one that ends:

> To-night I heard a bell again—
> Outside it was the same mist of fine rain,
> The lamps just lighted down the long, dim
> street,
> No one for me—
> I think it is myself I go to meet:
> I do not care; some day I *shall* not think; I
> shall not *be*!

The deception of the initial impression, subsequently overturned, is part of what makes Mew so powerful; but even Brad Leithauser, in his otherwise fine prefatory essay on the poet, calls her a "miniaturist" and speaks of her "control." Perhaps this is a transferal of the attributes of the woman to the poems. How are these lines controlled, except in the sense of a perfectly executed invocation of wildness and the loss of control? And how can a writer whose themes included madness, death, and despair at a Godless universe be called a miniaturist?

"The Farmer's Wife," the title poem of Mew's first book, is one of her earliest and best known. As in many of her short stories, the narrator is a man, in this case a farmer. (Another dialect opportunity!) He tells us how his too young wife had run away, then was hunted down and brought home. But she will not be his wife:

> She sleeps up in the attic there
> Alone, poor maid. 'Tis but a stair
> Betwixt us. Oh! My God! the down,
> The soft young down of her, the brown,
> The brown of her—her eyes, her hair, her
> hair!

Mew was obsessed with beautiful hair—although, or possibly because, she wore her own cropped close. She was also at different times obsessed with women, two in particular, though neither romance flowered for her. Fitzgerald writes very well of Mew's love for Ella D'Arcy and May Sinclair—both writers, neither lesbian—in the same wry tone that she chronicles Mew's happier, less anguished associations; she has the historical gossip's knack for placing person-

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alities in context. Among the best portraits here are those of Mrs. Dawson Scott, a patron of the arts and founder of International PEN; and of museum curator Sydney Cockerell, who became Mew's gentleman caller and squire-about-town late in her life.

INSOFAR AS Mew can be said to have been in any "circle," it was in the outer orbit of the Poetry Bookshop, that famed shoestring operation run by Harold and Alida Monro. In its run-down premises on Devonshire Street (and later on Great Russell Street), the bookshop promoted, published, and even boarded a miscellaneous collection of poets. It was Alida who first noticed Mew's verse in a magazine, and who sought her out for inclusion in the bookshop's reading series. The two women became close friends over the years, and the Monros eventually published Mew's first book in 1916. But the mood of the day, exemplified by the highly influential *Georgian Poetry* volumes, was more disposed toward the likes of Rupert Brooke and Wilfrid Owen, those romantic, doomed voices that addressed the great public tragedy of the First World War. It was not easy for a poet like Mew to compete in this climate; nevertheless, by all accounts her readings—at the Poetry Bookshop and elsewhere—were mesmerizing:

> Privately she was half-pleased to have what she called "my jingles" or "my damned immortal work" recognized, and at the same time furious at something like the threat to her independence. . . . The effect of the readings was astonishing. . . . They sat facing the little collared and jacketed figure, with her typescripts and cigarettes, who would never begin until she felt like it. Once she got started (everyone agreed) Charlotte seemed possessed, and seemed not so much to be acting or reciting as a medium's body taken over by a distinct personality.

Certainly one of the charms of this book is the biographer's willingness to vent her opinions, which are usually tart and always commonsensical. Of Mrs. Scott, for instance: "In June or July [her entourage] was summoned to one of a series of cottages in Cornwall in which 'sanitation was not a successful feature,' but there was enthusiasm, red wine, and bracing sea air on the cliff-paths, up which Mrs. Dawson Scott walked barefoot, wearing a long velvet tea gown. It is easy to criticize such people, difficult to do without them." When Mew's dramatic adaptation of "The China Bowl" was rejected by several theatrical managers, "Charlotte, in her usual way, flung the script into a drawer, and is said never to have looked at it again. The theater was not her métier, but there are very few writers who don't believe that they can do a play, and none who don't take the rejection of a play as a personal insult."

After her years of poverty, friends banded together and secured a government artist's pension for Charlotte Mew; soon thereafter, she inherited a sum of money from an uncle and might have retired to some small degree of comfort and fame. But the deaths within two years of her mother and sister left her bereft, and in March 1928, after a breakdown of her own, she committed suicide in a private nursing home. It is greatly to Penelope Fitzgerald's credit that she has not turned this biography into one of those ghoulish mystery stories, reserved for suicides, wherein the entire life is cast retrospectively in the shadow of the subject's death. As one of Mew's friends, perhaps, Fitzgerald may be seen to have heeded the stern words from the *Purgatorio* on her headstone: "Cast down the seed of weeping and attend." She does not presume that she or we will get to know Charlotte Mew; only that her story be told.

APRIL BERNARD

April Bernard's first book of poems, *Blackbird Bye Bye*, was awarded the 1988 Walt Whitman Prize by the Academy of American Poets and will be published next year by Random House.

THE CONVERSION

The Making of the Atomic Bomb by Richard Rhodes

(Simon and Schuster, 886 pp., $12.95)

Making Weapons, Talking Peace by Herbert York

(Basic Books, 359 pp., $22.95)

There can be few events in the history of science that have been as well documented as the discovery that an atom of uranium can be split, releasing undreamed of quantities of energy. The reason why it enjoys this distinction is obvious. Seven years after the reaction had been demonstrated in the laboratory in 1938, a single fission or atom bomb obliterated Hiroshima. The story of the years that led up to the emergence of first the atom and then the hydrogen bomb in the United States has been told and retold so often in official histories, in biographies, in popular accounts, and in scholarly works that have assessed the available evidence that it seems hardly possible that there is anything more to be said on the subject.

Richard Rhodes's *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* and Herbert York's *Making Weapons, Talking Peace* prove otherwise. The first is a monumental study by a writer better known as a novelist than a scientist, and the second the autobiography of a physicist who in 1943, a few weeks after he earned his bachelor's degree, was recruited into the project to produce a bomb and who became one of the better-known designers of weapons in the United States during the postwar period, and then one of the apostles for peace.

Rhodes's book richly deserves the acclaim that it has already been accorded. He has taken infinite trouble to understand and to outline in simple language the principles of nuclear physics that are the foundation on which the story of the bomb rests. The personalities who move through his book come to life in a way that they are unlikely to have done had they been depicted by a scientist's pen. Rhodes has searched primary sources, read widely, and interviewed many who were involved (there are 70 pages of notes and bibliographical references). I have no doubt that his book will stand

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for years to come as an authoritative account of the way our nuclear age started. Above all, lengthy though it is, it will be enjoyed as a magnificent read.

Rhodes's book starts with the story of the revolutionary inquiries into the nature of the atom that were in progress in Europe at the beginning of the century. By 1903 it had already been calculated that the energy associated with the radioactive disintegration of an atom would be at least 20,000 times, and possibly more than a million times, greater than the amount of energy involved in the molecular rearrangements that occur during an ordinary chemical explosion. By 1934 enough light had been thrown on the structure of the atom for Leo Szilard, a Hungarian-born theoretical physicist who had worked with Einstein in Berlin in the 1920s, to formulate the "laws" that would govern a sustained process of atomic disintegration—or as it is called, a chain reaction—in a mass of radioactive material.

SZILARD HAD in effect outlined the basic specifications for an atom bomb. He was then living in London, having left Germany when he sensed the coming of Hitler, and he set out his ideas in the form of two patents, which he assigned to the British Admiralty. Four years later Szilard was in New York. The results of some further experimental work carried out in a few European laboratories had given substance to his theoretical ideas about the harnessing of nuclear energy. War was looming. Szilard had no difficulty stimulating other refugee scientists to help him take his ideas about how to make a nuclear bomb a step further. He also drafted a letter, which he got Einstein to sign, alerting President Roosevelt to the danger of Germany getting the bomb first. At the end of 1942 the president authorized the organization of the vast and scattered industrial and scientific agency that became known as the Manhattan Project and that, under the scientific direction of Robert Oppenheimer, in little more than two years succeeded in producing the bomb that flattened Hiroshima.

In his final chapter Rhodes vividly recounts the arguments that then surfaced about the desirability of moving immediately to the development of the much more powerful hydrogen or "super" bomb; about the central part that Edward Teller played in that debate, and his maneuvering against Oppenheimer; and about the hearings that ended in Oppenheimer being declared in effect a security risk—mainly because he had not been frank about some of his left-wing contacts during the '30s, in the period of the Spanish Civil War. Rhodes also reviews the prognostications about the likely future for a nuclear world that were then being aired by some of the more prominent scientists engaged in the debate.

THE Making Of The Atom Bomb thus provides an admirable background for the personal story that has now been told by Herbert York, one of the hundreds of young physics graduates who were recruited into the new world that the titans of nuclear physics had taken 50 years to create. York was 21, a first-year graduate student, when he moved from the University of Rochester to Ernest Lawrence's laboratory at Berkeley in the middle of 1943. Lawrence, the distinguished experimentalist who invented the cyclotron—or atom smasher, as it was then called—was already involved in the in the Manhattan Project. For a brief period York worked with him on a prototype plant to enrich the fissile material uranium 235. He was then sent to the production plant that had been built in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, to produce larger quantities of enriched uranium for the central nuclear weapons laboratory at Los Alamos, about whose work York at the time knew all but nothing. Gen. Leslie Groves, the executive director of the Manhattan Project, did not believe in broadcasting unnecessary information about what was afoot. York did not even know about the successful Alamogordo test of an experimental bomb until after the capitulation of Japan. Not surprisingly, and like most of the other young scientists with whom he had been working, he felt elated that the work they had been doing had contributed to the development of the bomb that had helped to bring the war to a summary end.

York then returned to Berkeley to complete his graduate work under Lawrence, whom he hero-worshiped despite the strict discipline imposed by his master, by whom he was appointed to a permanent post after receiving his doctorate in 1949, the very year that the Russians exploded their first atom bomb. During this period York met, and impressed, many of the big names in the field, among them Teller, under whose spell he seems to have fallen. He served as one of Lawrence's emissaries in the discussions that led to the creation in 1951 of a nuclear weapons laboratory in Livermore, near Berkeley, to complement the one at Los

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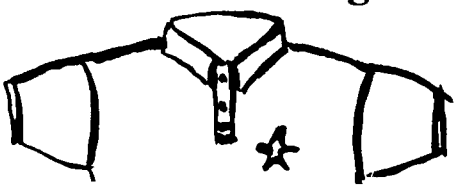

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Alamos. Lawrence had been persuaded by Teller that a second laboratory was needed to help discharge the considerable task of developing the "super," a project that President Truman had now authorized. In Teller's opinion, Oppenheimer and Los Alamos, despite Truman's go-ahead, were not showing enough enthusiasm for the task they had been given.

In 1952 York was appointed the first director of the new laboratory—with Teller in the background, ready to veto any element of the laboratory's work of which he disapproved. York immediately lived up to the reputation that he had gained as a vigorous and competent organizer, and as a leader of men. He pushed ahead fast in recruiting and then encouraging his team of young scientists in the design of new warheads for purposes that they themselves dreamed up. They did not wait to be told by the military what their operational requirements were, but went ahead on their own, confident that the services would find a use for anything they were offered. York took part in the tests in the Pacific of the first prototype super.

With his reputation as a doer growing apace, it was not surprising that York soon found himself called on to participate in the scientific councils of Washington that dealt with the development of nuclear and other weapons. In 1957, the year of Sputnik, President Eisenhower appointed a Science Advisory Committee under James Killian, the president of MIT. York became a member, and so began to associate with a far wider group of the leaders of American science than those he had already met. When an Advanced Research Projects Agency was established in the Pentagon in early 1958, he became its head, moving at the end of the same year to the more important and newly created office of Director of Defense Research and Engineering, a position from which he retired early in 1961. He had suffered a severe heart attack a few months before, at the early age of 39. The burden he had been carrying was enormous: the directorship of Defense Research and Engineering had been established by Congress to help curb the vast number of research and development projects the three services were launching. York found there were about 80,000 with which he had to deal. During the years that York served in the Pentagon the seeds had been sown for almost all the weapon systems that now make up the United States' armory.

INTENSITIES & ANALOGIES

by A.R. Thurar

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AFTER HIS departure from the Pentagon, York became chancellor of the new San Diego campus of the University of California, an administrative post from which he soon retired to become professor of physics. This post he also quickly relinquished in favor of a less demanding administrative university job, and one that allowed him more time to spend on consultative work in Washington. To cap his academic career, the university allowed him in 1972 to establish a new school, the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, where students could learn about the impact of science and technology on public affairs, and particularly on the arms race. He helped set up the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the State Department, and finally, during the Carter administration, became the American ambassador to the Comprehensive Test Ban negotiations that were reopened in 1977, but that came to a grinding halt in 1981 after Ronald Reagan took office.

York was too young to have played a leading part in the opening phase of the nuclear era, but his story—sometimes presented almost as a diary—is certainly that of a major figure in all that followed. As a young graduate he was dazzled by Lawrence and Teller, and the fact that they turned out to be hard-liners was bound to affect his initial attitude toward the bomb, and in particular to the conflict over the building of the super. His forthright and self-confident approach to the challenges that were put before him was often colored by an engaging naïveté. When he was told by Neil McElroy, the secretary of defense, that President Eisenhower had agreed that the post of Director of Defense Research and Engineering should be offered to him, York writes that he replied, "Fine, I'll talk with the President about it as soon as he wishes." He did not know that presidents rarely see more than a few of those who are known as presidential appointees.

At first York was also an out-and-out uncritical weaponeer, encouraging even such outlandish projects as nuclear bazookas. This was in pursuit of a philosophy that he then believed would both assure continuing American superiority in nuclear weaponry and provide an "intellectual stimulus and prospect for adventure" for young scientists. York confesses that pushing ahead with new nuclear designs without waiting to be told whether they were needed spurred the arms race, but he defends the practice as "one of the many contradictions that our nuclear security dilemma necessarily fosters." Eisenhower's view, on the other hand, was that "the whole thing" (meaning the procedure that York followed) was "crazy," and that "something simply has to be done about it." But, York observes, American society is so organized that the nation's commander in chief can be made impotent in dealing with his subordinate officers "because the Congress, the press, and ultimately the people" will not allow him to be otherwise.

LIKE HIS early mentor Teller, York was opposed to the idea of a ban on nuclear tests when the issue first surfaced. When the president's Science Advisory Committee, of which he was a member, voted on the issue, York screwed up the necessary courage to abstain, even though he felt overwhelmed by the fact that all its other members—his seniors—voted in favor of a ban. Further thought soon made him change his mind. He realized that "a nuclear test ban was in the best interests of the United States—and of all mankind," agreeing with the president, but contrary to the views of the majority of "the national security establishment." On this point he was also at one with Jerome Wiesner, President Kennedy's science adviser, together with whom he published a powerful article in 1964 in which they argued that in assuring national security, further tests of nuclear weapons were unnecessary. This view York later elaborated in a short book entitled *Race to Oblivion* that he published in 1970.

Years later, when York was the chief American negotiator at the resumed Comprehensive Test Ban talks, things had not changed. One day he had to appear before the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They were opposed, to a man, to the policy of the president—this time Carter. York writes that he did not feel "happy or relaxed" arguing a case that the chiefs

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felt was opposed to the national interest. What he—"deep down . . . a patriotic country boy"—did not remember on that occasion was that he knew far more about nuclear weapons and probably appreciated far better than did the top brass what the consequences of the arms race would be.

WHEN ONE considers the views about the dangers of an arms race held by the majority of the prominent physicists who figure in Rhodes's book, it is difficult not to conclude that the basis of the hostile attitude to a nuclear test ban that York encountered at his meeting with the chiefs was the very enthusiasm with which the postwar generation of scientists in the weapons laboratories set out to produce any and every kind of nuclear explosive device. The laboratories, the services, and the Atomic Energy Commission (today the Department of Energy) formed an internally reinforcing system, out of which there developed an uncritical mind-set about the value of nuclear weapons, and a determination to defeat by any means those who questioned the wisdom of engaging in the nuclear arms race. No doubt the same was happening on the other side of the "Iron Curtain," and no doubt the two sides, supposedly working against each other, were in fact reinforcing each other's efforts as though they both belonged to the same system.

What the INF Treaty and the current talk of 50 percent cuts now make clear is that the race has been allowed to continue well beyond a point that makes sense. What is also now clear is that a comprehensive test ban, concluded in the early 1960s, would have been far more in the interests of the United States than was the continuation of tests by the two sides. Although York did not see this at first, the fact that he came to do so marks him out from all except a handful of the thousands of weapons scientists who have inhabited Livermore and Los Alamos over the past few decades. The pity is that there were so few who came to realize that an endless chase after more sophisticated nuclear weaponry is strategically pointless.

SOLLY ZUCKERMAN

Solly Zuckerman was chief scientific adviser to the British Ministry of Defense and to the British government from 1960 to 1971. He is the author of *Star Wars in a Nuclear World* (William Kimber).

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

To the editors:

My favorite of the myriad confused versions of the Pledge of Allegiance was overheard coming from third-graders: "I led the pigeons to the flag . . ."

LAUREN J. PRIEGUES
New York, New York

SOCIAL SECURITY BOURGEOISIE

To the editors:

I read Robert Kuttner's review of *Social Security: The System That Works* ("The Perfect Pension," July 4) in the same week that I received a benefit summary from my employer. It stated that if I continue to earn my current salary until age 65, I can expect monthly Social Security checks of $911. Curious as to just how good a deal I'm getting, I figured the future value of my past, present, and future contributions as if they were being invested for my benefit alone. In my calculations, all of the assumptions were designed to favor the Social Security system: the FICA tax remains at the current 15.02 percent (instead of rising, as it is scheduled to do), my salary remains constant, and a modest annual return of seven percent is imputed. To my astonishment, my Social Security "account" should come to $1,258,141 at retirement. Clearly most people would prefer to claim that sum, becoming instant millionaires, than settling for a $911 monthly stipend.

Since I was born in one of the peak baby boom years (1959), and since my income puts me squarely in the middle class, I belong to a very large cohort that will soon realize that Social Security is, for them, less than the perfect pension. And as we've read before in TNR, any social welfare program that does not have the broad support of the middle class will face a desperate fight for its political survival.

WILLIAM BRIGHAM
Mobile, Alabama

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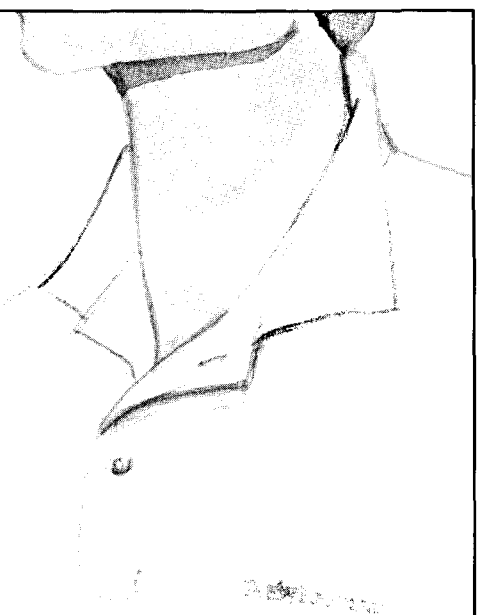

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Cross Talk

ONE OF THE THINGS that has made local television news less and less tolerable in recent years is the spread of "crosstalk" or "backchat." This is the practice of having stilted exchanges between the main newsreader, called the anchorperson, and a reporter who has just finished reciting a story. The idea, I am told by friends who work in television, is (*a*) to please viewers by humanizing the little figures on the screen and (*b*) to add to the "credibility" of the anchorperson by demonstrating that he or she is "involved with the news" and "in charge." We see the reporter in his trench coat, standing in front of a building, holding his Eyewitness News Team microphone. "And so the mood here remains grim," the reporter is saying. "At City Hall, I'm News Seven's Bob Bobson. Dave?" "Good report, Bob," says the anchorperson, swiveling his chair to address a monitor on which Bob's face may be seen, "but what would you say is the bottom line moodwise down there?" "Well, Dave, one highly placed source I talked to described it this way: nothing short of grim blah blah blah," natters Bob, as Dave nods sagely and such non-brain-dead viewers as may be watching think, *Please. Just give us the goddamn news.*

THE CROSSTALK VIRUS has now infected the networks, the "CBS Evening News" being the chief carrier. I have thought long and hard about why this wretched practice is so peculiarly offensive. It's not just because the sight of Dan Rather being "spontaneous" is so excruciating. It's because the editorial work is supposed to be done *before* the program goes on the air. If whatever Dan is asking Leslie about is so important, if it's worthy of 30 or 40 precious seconds of the 20 minutes CBS allots to summarizing everything that happened in the world that day, then why didn't Dan (who takes a screen credit as "managing editor" of his program) tell Leslie to put it in her story ahead of time? And if it isn't important, why is he asking her about it in the first place? I'm not sure which possibility is worse: that these embarrassing exchanges are staged, or that they're actually spontaneous. If they're staged, they insult our intelligence and compromise the integrity of the broadcast, such as it is. If they're spontaneous, they waste our time and that of CBS News, which even after recent cutbacks probably has enough competent people to fill a 20-minute show with prepared material designed to communicate a maximum of information in a minimum of time. I mean, really. If newspapers treated their readers with the contempt television crosstalkers lavish on their viewers, then the *New York Times* would stop putting itself to the bother of writing stories. They'd just Xerox E. J. Dionne's notebook and give us that, along with a transcript of the afternoon story conference.

"WE ARE NOT gray grains of oatmeal in a porridge of privilege," said Lloyd Bentsen in his acceptance speech at the Democratic convention. Just so. Also, we are not cowflops of complacency in a meadow of mediocrity. We are not quasars of querulousness in a galaxy of greed. We are not pousse-cafés of presumption in a cocktail lounge of cronyism. We are not BMWs of braggadocio on a parkway of plutocracy. We are not courtesans of callousness in a massage parlor of mendacity. We are not sun-dried tomatoes of sanctimony in a warm salad of wealth.

IT'S TOO BAD there isn't some way the Democratic Party could take obviously talented people and give them safe seats in the national legislature, the way they do in England. Because if there were, then Garrison Keillor would be senator from Minnesota and eventually, perhaps, president of the United States. I was never a "Prairie Home Companion" moonie, though I did like the bits where Keillor talked about Lake Wobegon, which reminded me of Jean Shepard's old radio monologues. I saw Keillor on "Nightline" a few years ago. I forget why he was being interviewed, but he handled Ted with a calm sagacity that was at once regal and democratic. I remember thinking, "This guy's Lincolnesque. Stick him in the White House." Anyway, what I'm building up to here is to note that the planners of the Democratic convention did a good thing when they put Keillor in charge of the national anthem at the opening session. As we all know, the usual practice is for some overmiked diva or pop star to belt out the song with full orchestral accompaniment while everybody else stands there hoping not to go deaf. What Keillor did was to have a little group of elementary school kids sing it in wavering voices to the accompaniment of just a piano. The result was that everybody in the hall sang along in full voice, which for a moment turned the convention into a secular congregation. I normally hate group singing, but this time I'm convinced it established at the outset the feeling of unity and fellowship that ultimately became the dominant mood. I move a vote of thanks to Mr. Keillor.

I NOTICE A sudden outbreak of newspaper interest in the question of whether it is advisable to give money to panhandlers. The *New York Times* had a front-page story about this the other day, followed by an op-ed piece in which an expert argued that these people would be better off in soup kitchens or city-run flophouses, that giving money only encourages them, and that anyway they'll probably just spend it on booze or drugs. I don't find these arguments persuasive. I've had a "policy" on panhandlers for many years, one I'd like to "share" with perplexed readers. My policy is this: I always give a quarter and wish the person good luck. Always. No exceptions. That way I don't have to think about it. And the fact that my response is automatic and impersonal preserves both my dignity and the panhandler's. I view the transaction as an entitlement program. As a method of income redistribution, it is more efficient than any other form of public or private beneficence, because there are no administrative costs, no paperwork, and no delays. New York's Mayor Ed Koch, asked to comment on the panhandling crisis, advised people who feel guilty to go to a psychiatrist. But if you have a policy, guilt doesn't enter into it. Also, an hour with a psychiatrist costs the same as giving quarters to 400 panhandlers. When I first evolved my policy, I only gave to people older than I was. If they were younger, I'd tell them, "Get a job." Now they're almost all younger than I am, and anyhow I've come to realize that panhandling *is* a job. It may not be a "productive" job, but then neither is asking redundant questions on TV.

HENDRIK HERTZBERG

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START YOUR ASIAN ADVENTURES WITH AN UNFORGETTABLE MANILA STOPOVER FOR ONLY US $30

Take a break from a long Trans-Pacific flight. Recharge in vibrant Manila. It won't even cost you half as much as you'd imagined.

Relax in any of our deluxe hotels for only US$30 a day. Treat yourself to a gastronomic feast for a mere US$10. Swingaround Manila: the city sights, the laser discos, cozy music bars, bargain centers. All for only a fraction of what you would pay in other major Asian cities.

Go for a Manila Stopover. It's worth more than a pause.

For particulars, call your travel agent or 800-I-Fly-PAL (800-435-9725).

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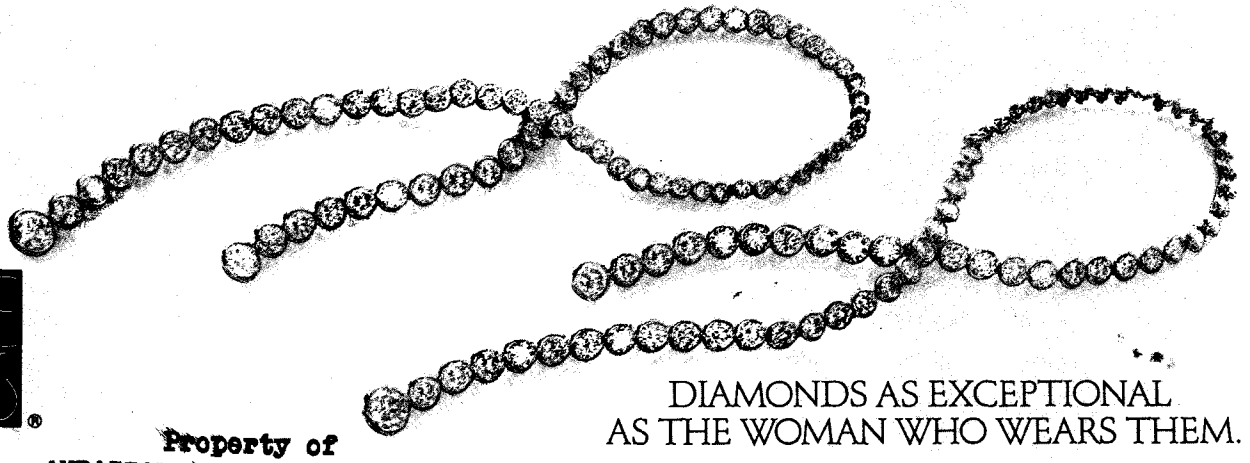
THERE IS A SINGULAR PLEASURE THAT COMES FROM DISCOVERING SOMETHING AS EXQUISITE AS SHE IS.

Some men have the ability not only to embrace beauty, but to revel in it. They joyfully acknowledge that there is a particular pleasure in giving something rare and lovely. The rarest and loveliest object of all being a fine quality diamond of a carat or more.

A shimmering strand of diamonds, at one end a one carat stone, at the other, a ½ carat, wraps and ties around the ear, forming two falling tassels of flexible diamonds, which makes wearing the Jose Hess "Boomerang Wrap"™ a most sensual experience.

Your jeweler can show you many other pieces of quality diamond jewelry that will reflect your own taste and style. And tells the world that you delight in that which is truly and eternally beautiful. Jose Hess designs are available at fine jewelry stores. For the one nearest you, call: 212 753-5880.

A diamond is forever.



JOSE HESS®

DIAMONDS AS EXCEPTIONAL AS THE WOMAN WHO WEARS THEM.

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